

THE CENTRE-TABLE.

NO. IV.

BY MISS LESLIE.

MRS. CHASTNEY, the aunt of Mrs. Wayland, arrived from Boston. This lady had certainly grown old with a good grace. Her clear, healthy complexion, lively eye, and figure still erect and symmetrical, though somewhat *embonpoint*, gave her the appearance of being considerably younger than she really was. But, with regard to dress, she had long since given up to old womanhood, though very prematurely in the opinion of her friends. She wore her own silver hair plainly and smoothly parted on her high and still unwrinkled forehead, and over it a cap of clear muslin, bordered with fine lace, (she was curious in laces,) and trimmed with ribbon of one of the numerous shades of slate, lavender-colour, and gray—but, though small and simple, nothing could be more becoming than her caps. Her gown was always black, of chaly, alpaca or merino in winter, with a cape or pelerine of the same, a broad, black, velvet collar, and an under-handkerchief of French cambric, with a standing frill finely pleated. In summer, her dress was of black silk, with a square muslin 'kerchief folded in half and pinned on outside of her gown, which for many years had always been made unchangingly in a convenient and sensible fashion, suited to her age and figure.

The third of her late husband's property had placed at Mrs. Chastney's disposal a handsome income, of which she made a liberal use—keeping her house genteely and hospitably, and doing all possible acts of kindness to her relations and friends.

Mrs. Chastney was a native of Philadelphia, and only sister to Mr. Suffield, the father of Mrs. Wayland. While she was Miss Suffield, her artist brother took her with him to Europe, when he went thither to improve in his profession; and she passed some very happy years on the other side of the Atlantic, enjoying much, seeing much, and remembering much. Soon after their return to America, Miss Suffield was married to Mr. Chastney, a Boston merchant, who had been one of their fellow passengers in the ship that brought them home. Her brother was subsequently united to a very charming young lady, who inherited considerable property on the death of her father. Mr. Suffield, however, did not in consequence relinquish his profession, but taking his family with him, (including his daughter, afterwards Mrs. Wayland,) he made a second visit to Europe, where he profited greatly by witnessing the improved state of the pictorial world, and examining the works of the best living artists.

The venerable Mrs. Chastney was blest with a memory of extraordinary power and correctness; and she loved to gratify such of her auditors as delighted in listening to reminiscences of what is called in America, the olden time, and which generally means the period that began with the Revolution and ended with what we hope will continue always to be designated as "the last war." The friends of her niece united in rendering Mrs. Chastney's visit to Philadelphia as pleasant to her as possible; and round the cheerful and intelligent old lady was frequently found a larger assemblage of young people than that which encircled the reigning belle of the season.

One evening, at the centre-table of Mrs. Wayland, when Mrs. Cottinger had been remarking upon that fruitful subject, the inconvenience and ungracefulness of certain late fashions, Mrs. Martlet observed—"These things must seem very strange to you, Mrs. Chastney, compared with those of the good old times!"

Mrs. Chastney.—I have met with a copy of Goldsmith in which, at the line in the "Deserted Village,"

A time there was ere England's griefs began,

some person had written on the margin—

When could that time have possibly been?

In like manner, I may reply to you that, with regard to female attire, I recollect no period when the times were *good*, and when comfort, convenience, and, indeed, true elegance were not too generally sacrificed to the senseless caprices and arbitrary dictates of fashion. Feet were always pinched, waists were always squeezed, hair was always elaborately drest, and the habiliments of our ladies were always too warm for an American summer and too cold for an American winter—following blindly the modes of France and England, without reflecting that in those countries the temperature of the seasons is more uniform, and the extremes of heat and cold are rarely felt as on this side of the Atlantic.

Mrs. Pelby.—I am sure I wish little bonnets would go out of fashion and never come in again, for they freeze my face in winter and broil it in summer.

Mrs. Wayland.—But, my dear Mrs. Pelby, you are not obliged to wear those very small bonnets.

Mrs. Pelby.—Oh, there is no help for it as long as other people do. You may say what you please,

but you know my maxim is—"Tis as well to be out of the world as out of the fashion." To be sure it is very uncomfortable to have one's bonnet coggled up straight from one's forehead, rearing bolt upright, and exposing not only one's whole face, but nearly all the back of one's head. My skin is so fine and thin, that between sun and wind I have had it nearly all peeled off, beside using oceans of almond cream to make it feel better. And, one day, my principal hair-pins came out, and down fell all my hind hair, the back of my bonnet being so reared up as to be no safeguard, and there is no such thing as wearing a cap under them. I did not know it till I got home; and there I had been trailing my long hair down my back all the way up Chestnut street. One's hair is always a great plague to one.

Mrs. Chastney.—But much less so now than in the *bad old times*. I remember when it was the fashion to plaster the hair with pomatum and powder, frizzing it all around the face into the semblance of a thick white fog, or twirling it with heated irons into multitudes of stiff, hard, regular curls, arranged horizontally. The hind hair, if worn down the back, as was sometimes the mode, (not only for young ladies but for their mammas,) also underwent the discipline of the pomatum roll, the curling irons, and the powder-puff. Generally it was turned up underneath, forming a deep broad fold, which rested on the neck behind and descended to the top of the gown-back. Sometimes a black velvet ribbon was passed through this immense loop of powdered hair, and encircling the neck was fastened in front with a brooch.

Mrs. Wayland.—Think of such a massy *chevelure*, thickened with pomatum and powder, being worn in Philadelphia in the dog-days.

Miss Olivant.—Yes—and, according to the testimony of our ancients, the dog-days were then much dogger than they are now.

Mrs. Chastney.—And the winters proportionately cold. To make hair-dressing less tedious, (and it frequently occupied two hours,) those who could afford the price adopted immense cushions, almost large enough to cover a chair-bottom.

Miss Brookley.—But on what part of their heads did they put them?

Mrs. Pelby.—Not at the back certainly.

Mrs. Chastney.—No—at the front; rising perpendicularly from the forehead more than a quarter of a yard, and spreading out as widely at the sides. The best cushions were stuffed with horse-hair, enclosed in a strong covering, and made as hard and firm as possible. They were then covered closely with a profusion of human hair, cut all of equal length; and this hair was either frizzed *en masse*, or curled all over in regular tiers, row above row, the whole being powdered very white. These cushions were tied on with strings that passed beneath the real hair at the back of the neck.

Miss Brookley.—But could bonnets be worn over such huge things?

Mrs. Chastney.—They could not. To admit a

cushion, it was necessary to put on, when out of doors, an enormous calash, resembling a gig-top. These calashes were worn in full promenade dress, and were made of very handsome silk, pink, blue, lilac, pea-green and other gay colours, and trimmed with lace. To steady the calash, it was expedient always to hold in your hand the two ends or corners that met beneath the chin.

Miss Brookley.—And what was the most fashionable material for gowns?

Mrs. Chastney.—Silk, satin or brocade; the last especially. The ground was generally light, with large vines of large flowers wandering largely over it, interspersed with straggling green leaves. Some had detached clusters or bouquets of flowers; others had flowers in baskets.

Mrs. Cottinger.—I regretted to see that, a few years since, our young ladies were taken with a whim of reviving their grandmothers' brocades, and wearing them to parties with very little alteration in the form—retaining even the tight sleeves, descending below the elbow, and terminating in a ruffle. I saw married ladies who, in addition to these antiquated and ungraceful dresses, disfigured their heads with tall, high-crowned caps, having broad pigeon-wing borders. They must have been likened, by all who remembered her, to the stage-dresses of that excellent actress *Mrs. Francis*, when she played *Miss Lucretia Mactab*, *Mrs. Malaprop*, and other ancient spinsters and dowagers.

Miss Olivant.—I was glad, however, to see that this revival of old silk gowns had but a very short reign. I cannot but think that the chief cause of even its partial success was the opportunity it afforded of showing what the grandmothers had been, and thus proving that the family had once had gentle blood in its veins—or rather money in its pockets; and that the grandfathers *must* have been persons that "were well to do in the world." I have heard that, in the times to which they belonged, the price, by the yard, of these thick, heavy flowered silks, was counted, not in dollars, but in guineas.

Mrs. Chastney.—True—yet in those times, as in the present, there were people whose extravagance far exceeded their income; and there was the same disposition to dress expensively *coute qui coute*. The wife of a small tradesman or mechanic, by dint of pinching and screwing her household, and teasing her husband, sometimes succeeded in obtaining one of those costly brocades; which, it was true, would last her as a holiday gown for the remainder of her life, and could then be bequeathed in good preservation to her daughter.

Mrs. Pelby.—Well, I have one of those brocades, and it is so stiff and thick that it absolutely will stand alone. It is one of those with a white ground, and green leaves, and large red flowers going all about it. I would have had it fixed up, and worn it to parties the season the old silks came into fashion again, but my husband said it looked like wall-paper; and I gave it up when he offered me a new velvet dress instead of it. But my grandmother was really somebody.

Miss Olivant.—I do not in the least doubt it.

Mrs. Pelby.—I have often been told that I look myself as if I had been something all my life.

Miss Olivant.—Certainly—any one can see in a moment that you are something.

Mrs. Pelby.—I am glad to hear you say so, for I have always considered you an excellent judge of people.

Miss Brookley.—Mrs. Chastney, how did the little girls dress when you were one?

Mrs. Chastney.—We wore very full-skirted, full-bodied frocks; the body and skirt all in one piece, confined at the waist with simply a casing and a drawing-string. These bodies fastened at the back, having another drawing-string round the neck. Sometimes, when the waist was very long, there was still another casing or drawing-string half way down the waist, looking a little like one body above another. The frock skirts were always open behind and the petticoat such as could be displayed. The sleeves were called short ones, but they descended to the elbows or below them—always, when tight, an ungraceful length, for it makes the upper part of the arm look too long and thin, and the lower part too short. If a tight sleeve covers the elbow at all, it should come quite down to the wrist, or it will give an effect of oldness and awkwardness to the arm.

Miss Brookley.—And how did the little girls wear their hair?

Mrs. Chastney.—I am sorry to tell you that, in the days of my early juvenility, the hair was cut straight along the forehead—a large square lock being left at each side to hang over the ears. Behind, a portion of the long hair was gathered into a handful just below the top of the head, and tied back with a pink, blue, or green ribbon; the remainder hung loose on the neck. Happy were the little girls whose hair curled naturally; they escaped the nightly process of putting up in papers the ear-locks, and the hind-locks, and of sleeping uneasily with these hard knots or twists of paper rubbing about under their night-caps, and hurting their heads. On great occasions, our hair was curled with heated tongs, and a turn upwards given to that which half-concealed our foreheads; and we were much delighted when the powder puff was unsparingly applied as the last finish. Our common frocks were of English chintz that would now be considered remarkably ugly, though it was four times the price of the American calicoes that are now so handsome and so cheap. In winter, our common dresses were a twilled worsted, called by the strange name of wild-bore, the colours generally crimson, green or dark blue. Our best frocks were of white tamboured muslin, and our "better-most of all" of muslin tamboured with coloured silks. Thin muslin frocks were worn over coloured petticoats, generally of blue or pink durant, a very stiff, glossy, worsted stuff. Sometimes a muslin tamboured in colours covered a complete underdress of pink silk. Our shoes were generally red morocco, the straps fastened by silver clasps or buckles.

Miss Olivant.—"The shoes, at least, must have been pretty.

Mrs. Chastney.—I recollect perfectly the dress I wore at my first tea-party. It was a white tamboured muslin over a pink durant petticoat. The frock was bound round the neck and sleeves with pink satin ribbon, and there was a sash to match. My hair had gone through the operation of the curling tongs and been well powdered; and it was tied back with the same pink ribbon, decorated with a large cockade on the top.

In those days, when a little girl had a tea-party, it was customary to invite all her schoolmates, who, on that occasion, were always indulged with a half-holiday. A note was prepared for each of the girls, and distributed at school by the party-giver herself. The fashion was for all to assemble in full dress at the school-room, by two o'clock in the afternoon. From thence they marched in procession to the residence of their young hostess—she heading the troop, accompanied by a sister or daughter of their teacher. Unless in winter, they walked unbonneted and unshawled, in all the magnificence of gay-coloured petticoats, thin muslin frocks, bright ribbons, and powdered heads; each holding or seeming to hold, a spread fan before her face. The boys at the corners complimented them by "hurrahing for the tea-party." At my first *fête*, I was honoured by the company of two little French girls from the West Indies. Adèle and Fanfan were in great vogue at the juvenile entertainments of that season, because, as was regularly specified in talking of them, "they could not speak a word of English," and they always, to a new acquaintance, said something which we called "Pollywoo Francey," for which we listened impatiently.

Miss Olivant.—Even in our own times we see foreigners successfully going the rounds of society, when their only qualification seems to be that of not speaking a word of English.

Mrs. Martlet.—Add one other—that of being "bearded like the pard."

Miss Olivant.—True—or rather like "most patriarchal goats."

Mrs. Cottinger.—The first time my little niece Lucy saw a gentleman with a long bushy beard, she jumped down from the chair on which she had been looking out of the window at the city sights, (all being novelties to her,) and running into my room, exclaimed—"Oh, aunt, dear aunt, I have seen a prophet go by!"

Miss Brookley.—And now, Mrs. Chastney, how did the little French West Indians look?

Mrs. Chastney.—They were very dark-complexioned, and their long jet-black hair was plaited in one tail, Chinese fashion, and reached nearly down to their heels. Coming from a tropical climate, they were dressed entirely in white muslin, made loose like slips, and in their ears were immensely long ear-rings, of purple and gold. When these children were seen in our tea-party procession, the boys added to their usual acclamations—"Hurrah for the Creeowls." In those days boys

were generally excluded from the juvenile tea-parties, their habits being entirely too boisterous. I remember being at a Christmas dinner-party given entirely to children, by a lady and gentleman who had none of their own, and who thought the only way to make young people happy was never in the least to control them. To this party the brothers of the girls were invited. Our entertainers were persons of great wealth, great profuseness, and great indulgence towards every human being; and as there was no check upon the exuberance of animal spirits evinced by the young gentlemen, you may be sure the fun went "fast and furious." After the cloth was removed, and wine and fruit placed on the table, (for the boys would have been highly offended had there been no wine,) one of them, a stout youth about twelve years old, went down into the hall, equipped himself in his hat and a long, thick, greatcoat, quite wet with rain, and mounting on the mahogany table, ran along its whole length, swaying the heavy coat from side to side, and sweeping off the plates and glasses with it, his eyes being fixed on the ceiling with an air of the utmost *nonchalance*. This was considered a capital joke, and with all its roughness, I must say the effect was so ridiculous, that even our host and hostess could not help laughing, notwithstanding the destruction of their glass and China, and the overturning of the fruit and wine. Of the girls, some were diverted and some were frightened at the reckless havoc among the table things. The plays and amusements of that afternoon, in consequence of the boys participating, were naturally characterized by an immense quantity of what is now called excitement. There were unbounded scamperings, prancings, tumblings, chasings, scramblings and shoutings, seasoned with chair-breakings, stool-crushings, hand-bruising, forehead-bumpings, finger-pinchings by door-slamming, tread-on-toeing, dress-tearings, and little-girl-demolishings—some of those "tiny elves, for fear," looking as if they could "creep into acorn cups and hide them there." One who, having no brother, was unpractised in this way, said to me—"Oh, Fanny, boys are dreadful creatures!"

When we, the girls, had our parties all to ourselves, they went off very pleasantly. We played prettily, and generally kept "within the limits of becoming mirth," and the longest afternoon appeared short to us. Towards its close we were all seated at a very long tea-table, and regaled with cakes, sweetmeats, and various good things. In summer, we always got home before dark. In the winter, our parents sent for us about seven o'clock, and we went to bed very happy and very tired; and the last tea-party served for conversation with our companions till the next came on.

I recollect one party which gave great dissatisfaction from circumstances which we pronounced "even worse than the boys." Among the pupils of Mrs. Ellison's school was Miss Mary, commonly called Molly Malden. In those days it was too customary, even among the most genteel people,

to use very ungenteel diminutives for proper names. Even in the best families, Marys, Elizas, Eleanors and Margaretts, were called Mollys, Betsys, Nellys and Peggys; and very elegant young ladies were often allowed to grow up with those undignified appellations. There were also among our fashionable belles, Sallys, Jennys, Nancys and Kittys.

Miss Olivant.—*Mais nous avons changé tout cela.* Yet I confess I am often rather disgusted to see, in some of our late novels, a silly whim of reviving this old-fashioned coarseness, and giving the heroines (lovely, refined and delicate as heroines always are,) such names as Bess or Kate.

Mrs. Martlet.—You know, in the early part of the last century, the daughters of noblemen, the Lady Elizabeths, Lady Barbaras, and Lady Arabellas of that period, answered to the titles of Lady Betty, Lady Bab, and Lady Bell.

Mrs. Chastney.—By way of reconciling us to the quaint abbreviations of other days, we are told by old Virginians that Martha Washington was known in her girlhood as Patsey Dandridge. But my schoolmate, Miss Molly Malden, already testified a just preference for the name of Mary, and would have exacted that title from all the *tiers état* of Mrs. Ellison's school, only none of them were willing to "set her up with it," particularly as she was considered very proud and full of airs, talking greatly of a ship, and a coach, and a negro man called Cupid, that had all been owned by her deceased father.

Miss Molly Malden brought her invitation notes to school, and gave them round to all of us, excepting four or five who were the children of mechanics. This filled us with generous indignation, and Mrs. Ellison's daughter declined going in consequence of the affront put on a portion of her mother's pupils. Nevertheless, all others who were invited, accepted. For my part, I had much difficulty in getting permission from my parents to attend Miss Malden's party—my father having a mortal contempt for every species of false pride, particularly when accompanied by insolence, and this feeling he endeavoured to cherish in his children. However, as Molly Malden had given great hints about the glories we were to expect at this her first party, and informed us how many dollars it was to cost, I was really very anxious to be there, and finally persuaded my father to permit me to go—my mother remarking, in my behalf, that children were but children, and to them a party was always a party.

Though it was in midwinter, the hour specified was four o'clock; and it was so late before Miss Molly came to head the procession, that much of its display was shrouded in the gathering darkness of twilight. We were ushered into a large parlour, where the furniture, though once very showy, was now faded and worn out. Here we were received by Miss Jenny Malden, who was beginning to take the name of Jane, a young lady of fifteen, of whom we had heard much from her sister Molly—Miss Jenny being a pupil of Mrs. Bourdeau,

whose very fashionable boarding-school was situated in what would now be the rear of the Pennsylvania Bank, in Second street. After we had all taken our seats, Miss Jenny volunteered "to play the harpsichord to us." She seated herself at the instrument, and performed a succession of pieces, in which we vainly tried to discover something like a tune, and which one of the little girls remarked "went every how." These things her sister Molly informed us were sonatas; and that they had just come into fashion, and that in a short time tunes would be vulgar.

O'Keefe's little opera of *The Poor Soldier* was then in the full tide of its first success; and the excellence of its music had been proved to the utmost by that infallible test of being sung about the streets by the boys. After much consultation in low voices, I was deputed by half a dozen other children to humbly petition Miss Jenny for "*The Rose-tree in Full Bearing*," or "*The Twins of Latona*." But the young lady tossed her head, and said she had never heard of the things, and commenced another sonata. I consoled myself by standing near the harpsichord and watching Miss Jenny, as, with elbows "outstretched like wings," and hands flapping up and down, raised high and thrown back at every alternate note, she laboured through a composition which, to the unsophisticated ears of her juvenile audience, "had neither shape nor feature." When it ceased, she turned round and asked us if it was not delightful. Being but children, we had so little sense as to giggle all round at the question; and Miss Jenny and Miss Molly exchanged looks, and then left the room together as if planning a punishment for us. There was, as you may suppose, a great outbreak of laughing and talking as soon as we saw ourselves alone. Presently, tea was brought in by a black servant, whom we found to be no less a personage than the identical Cupid. He was followed by the ladies of the family; and we were somewhat scandalized at seeing Mrs. Malden disrespectfully arrayed in a dark calico wrapper, and a large morning cap which entirely hid her hair. This costume of the lady of the house we considered a slight to her daughter's tea-party. Tea was handed round by the said Cupid, alternately with a tray furnished with toast, bread and butter, soaked crackers, and a basket of federal cakes, which, notwithstanding their patriotic title, are deservedly unpopular with all lovers of sweet things, on account of their extreme dryness and insipidity, and their producing a sensation like chewing and swallowing sawdust. There was no other sort, and that evening we were all particularly good haters of federal cakes. Nevertheless, we ate them, justly considering that cakes were cakes.

Now, as some of the children were very small, and had never in their lives had their tea away from a table, they were much embarrassed in managing the business of taking it from a cup and saucer held in the hand, at the same time balancing a plate on their laps. One poor little girl overset her

cup, and the tea poured all down the side of her skirt. Mrs. Malden, who had not before spoken, now started from her chair, followed by her daughters, and ran to see if any of the spilt tea had splashed on the carpet; and expressed her joy at finding it had all gone through to the child's silk slip. Another unfortunate infant let fall her plate, and with it a slice of toast, which, (as has been truly remarked,) of course "fell on the butter'd side." Mrs. Malden again started forward, declared that this time the carpet was ruined, and said—"Really, when children don't know how to behave themselves, and have never been taught to take their tea in a genteel manner, their parents should have sense enough to keep them at home."

The little delinquent, (whose eyes had been filling and lips quivering from the moment of dropping the plate,) at this rebuke burst into tears, and her young companion in misfortune, she of the spilt tea, now gave audible vent to her own grief and mortification, and the unhappy children both sobbed in concert. "Why, this is dreadful!"—exclaimed Mrs. Malden. "Cupid, take those naughty children out of the room, and carry them up stairs, and don't let me see them again. They are disgracing my daughter's tea-party. Who are they? Who do they belong to? Molly, did not I desire that your company should be select?"

Molly now whispered the names of the parents, and Mrs. Malden found that the fathers of the children were both members of Congress. "Take them away for the present"—said Mrs. Malden to Cupid—"they *must* have *some* punishment for their future benefit. When they feel quite good, they may return to the parlour."

The two little girls at first increased their cries, pulling back when Cupid attempted to lead them away; but on his stooping down, and whispering something, they accompanied him with the quietness of lambs. I must tell you, *par parenthèse*, they informed us, next day, that the kind-hearted Cupid had mended their broken hearts by the promise of a comfortable tea in the kitchen. To this place he conducted them; and, on being consigned to the cook, she seated them at a little table, over which she spread a clean towel, and regaled them with an ample supper of much better things than they had seen in the parlour. Feeling quite good after this, they ventured back, and took lowly seats in a corner.

The little culprits were scarcely removed, when another ill-fated child, whose attention had been riveted on the scene, and whose mind, perhaps, was still absorbed in thinking of it, suddenly dropped both her cup and saucer, and in her consequent fright, started up and let her plate fall from her lap. This time, cup, saucer and plate, all were broken, but luckily they chanced to be empty. "Good gracious!"—exclaimed Mrs. Malden—"how they are demolishing my property!" Then, turning to Miss Jenny—"Is not this the child?"—said she, in a half voice—"that you pointed out to me as Judge Greenlaw's daughter?" "Yes it is"—replied

Jenny—"and, therefore, she cannot be punished; but for fear of more accidents, I advise that this tea-drinking shall be stopped." "Cupid, tea is over"—said Mrs. Malden, aloud, to the man who had just returned to the parlour. "Carry out the waiters."

After tea was stopped, we, the children, hoped to have some play, but Molly Malden told us her mamma would not permit any thing that would occasion romping and scampering. So we decided upon "Uncle Johnny sick a-bed." And taking hands, we commenced singing the delectable and rhymeless verses belonging to that now obsolete pastime. As we all sung at the top of our voices, Mrs. Malden first stopped her ears with her hands, and then called her daughters to a conference, which ended in the lady leaving the room, and Miss Jenny informing us that while we stayed we must sit still, and employ ourselves in telling riddles, or some such quiet amusement.

We sat down and went to riddles, but we could not guess any except those that we knew already. Children rarely can. I remember we were all shocked at a terrible one repeated by Miss Jenny, who said she had learnt it from an English under-teacher at Mrs. Bourdeau's. "The Duke of Northumberland sent to the Queen of England a bottomless vessel to hold blood and bones in."

When we gave up, (which we did almost immediately, impatient for the additional horror of a dreadful explanation,) we found it to be nothing more than a gold ring—the blood and bones signifying the finger it was to encircle.

In the midst of our riddles, Mrs. Malden, who, it seems, had been half drest under her wrapper, now came down in *grand costume*, habited in a new-fashioned jacket and petticoat, of green and red-striped silk, trimmed with a quilling of green satin ribbon. Instead of a cap, she now wore a great frizzed cushion, well powdered, the space at the back of her head being occupied by a large bow and long lappets of black lace. We were quite glad that she had paid us the compliment of dressing for us at last. She went round among the children, informed them that they were sleepy, and consulting a watch that hung at her side, secured by an immense gold hook, which also sustained the weight of an infinite variety of seals, keys, and trinkets, she assured them it was time that all good little girls were in bed, and inquired if they did not expect soon to be sent for to go home. We knew not what to say. As so late an hour in a winter afternoon had been appointed for our assembling, we had not expected the party to break up before nine o'clock, and it was now but seven. Presently, a loud knocking at the front door was heard, and it was followed by successive other knocks, and the mother and daughters kept looking at each other. In a short time, numerous ladies and gentlemen entered the parlour by twos, by threes, and by fours, all in full dress, and all, as they came in bowing and curtsying very low. These reverences were duly returned by Mrs.

Malden; and Miss Jenny exhibited a new sliding curtsy, preparatory to which the left foot was first extended and then brought into "the second position," the right hand grasping and holding back the skirt of the dress. We admired this curtesy, (notwithstanding the unpopularity of Miss Jenny,) and practised it next day.

As the company assembled, and chairs became scarce, we poor children were dislodged from our seats. Even those who sat on low crickets were required to relinquish them to fat ladies that liked footstools. So we stood about wherever we could, seeming always in the way.

The fact was, that Mrs. Malden, with the wise design of killing two birds with one stone, had planned to have her own annual party of grown people at the same time with her daughter's juvenile tea-party, and of this we had not been apprized. We soon perceived that we were all considered *de trop*, and that there was great impatience to get rid of us; and, children as we were, it made us feel very uncomfortable. Presently, the sound of a fiddle was heard in the entry, and our faces brightened, and some of us who had learnt dancing, exclaimed—"A dance—a dance! Let us choose our partners." But we soon found that the dancing "was not for the like of us." A mulatto man who played on the violin at balls made his appearance, and then was seated just within the parlour door. And, not we, but the big people, as we called them, took partners. Miss Jenny led off as first couple with a young gentleman in a white satin tamboured waistcoat, and a grass-green coat, his hind hair tied in a double twist, and his side locks immensely frizzed, and the whole excessively powdered.

At Mrs. Malden's desire, we made ourselves as small as possible, which process we accomplished by huddling into the corners, that the dancers might have ample room and verge enough. At first, we derived some amusement from looking on, but with that amusement we were soon satiated; and we became very tired of hearing the monotonous tones and gazing at the monotonous figure of a country dance of those days, which has since been revived, and glorified with the title of "The Morning Star." Like most country dances, it seemed to be never ending, still beginning, and we were very glad when the bottom couple took places at the top. Mrs. Malden resumed worrying us about our being sleepy and going home; and, indeed, we heartily wished that the sending-for would begin. It began first with the smallest children, who rubbed open their half-closed eyes, and when taken out of the room to be equipped for their departure, whimpered almost unconsciously; and murmured fretfully that it was very hard to go home before they had a bit of pleasure. By nine o'clock, a large group, comprising all the girls who yet remained, found themselves in the entry, where the servants were waiting that had arrived to take them home. Just as we had finished preparing for our immediate departure, we saw Cupid and another coloured man carrying into the parlour trays

with pound-cakes, sweetmeats, whipt-creams, custards, and various other nice things, such as were in vogue at the parties of that period. This was the unkindest cut of all. To have had no amusement but Miss Jenny's harpsichord; a paltry, uncomfortable tea, or rather only half a tea; to see the poor unlucky little girls distressed for accidental misdemeanours; to have learnt but one new riddle, and that a disagreeable one; to have been literally "pushed from our stools" by the big people; to be made sleepy by their tiresome dancing; and now, after all we had endured, to think that we were compelled to go home without even a taste of the good things—it was too much. Never were children more disappointed in a tea-party; and children feel disappointments much more keenly than grown persons suppose. Some of us bore it with silent dignity—biting in our lips, erecting our heads, and marching firmly out of the house, too proud to complain. Others vented their displeasure in audi-

ble terms as soon as they got into the street, beginning with—"Shame! shame! Oh! what a shame!" We all of us, on comparing notes, came to a conclusion that we never *had* liked Molly Malden—indeed, that we almost hated her. And I remarked, that as that was the case, we ought never to have gone to her party; and that, having done so, the treatment we received was no more than we deserved. But we all concurred in disliking Miss Jenny still more than Miss Molly, and their mother worse than either. Abby Jackson wondered if Molly would presume to show her face at school the next day. But Mary Williams set that question at rest, by giving us the welcome information that she had heard Mrs. Malden tell another lady that, her quarter being up at Mrs. Ellison's, Molly was next week to be transferred to Mrs. Bourdeau. Had we been boys, we would have greeted this excellent news with three cheers.

THE COLLEGE BOY.

BY MISS C. M. SEDGWICK.

(Concluded from page 31.)

Time flowed on so evenly and happily for the Oliphants, that there was no event in their family to record for indifferent eyes. The girls grew taller, some of them prettier and some plainer, and all made respectable progress in knowledge and accomplishments, and were as good-humoured, cheerful and affectionate a set of girls as ever blessed a home. Harley had been, in due time, restored to his class without loss of honour or standing. The junior was, perhaps, a little more sedate than the freshman, still the boy had not hardened into the sinew of the man. He was first in Greek and first in mathematics; first, too, in the hearts of his classmates, first, too, at a frolic, and, unhappily, the last to leave it. Mr. Oliphant had become rather more tranquil in his reliance upon him; but still he felt pretty much as a mother does who sees her child running and leaping along the edge of a precipice.

Again the vacation approached, the last vacation of the junior year, and Mr. Oliphant, as usual, began to look anxious. Jessie, who had grown up into the most graceful and lovely girl, of that loveliest age, seventeen, was the first to perceive her father's unusual seriousness, and to guess at its cause. She was the only member of the family who did not speak of Harley's coming home at least twenty times a day—indeed, she did not speak of it at all; but she was the first every morning at the post-office, and the busiest in the preparations for the fête days of vacation—for every day was to be a fête day. She had a pretty new dress made up that had long lain uncared for in her drawer; she repaired her old ones, and, for the first time, her dressmaker found her a little fidgety and difficult to please. She sent to town for a pink ribbon for her straw bonnet, and some rose buds for the *ruche*; and she blushed, and was silent, when little Fan said, archly—

"Ah, Miss sister Jessie, I know what you got those for—just because Harley said you looked prettiest in pink rose buds, for they matched your cheek!"

From her former experience, Jessie had rather a dread of letters as vacation approached, and she felt a manifest relief when the last day had passed without any, and so we believe did Mr. Oliphant; for, as the family were gathered round the tea-table, he was as animated as the children in all their joyful anticipations, and as confident that Harley would take his place among them at their next evening's tea-table.

It was Mr. Oliphant's habit to retire early to his room. He had gone there at ten o'clock. The family were all asleep except Jessie, and she had just taken from its hiding-place in her work-table, a portfolio she had been embroidering for Harley. Harley, the preceding summer, had selected a flower-emblem for each of the girls. The rose was Jessie—why, he did not say; carnation, Mary—rich and sweet, he said; crush it as you will, rich and sweet still!—the apple blossom, Ellen—the beautiful precedent of the least ostentatious and most valuable of all our fruits;—heart's-ease, Kate—beautiful and various; and graceful, delicate, sweet little Fan, was lily of the valley. On one side of the portfolio, Jessie had worked a bouquet composed of these flowers, and on the other a wreath of forget-me-nots entwined around an anchor. We leave our fair readers to expound these last emblems. Perhaps Jessie thought that memory and hope should go together.

"It has been rather foolish of me not to let the girls know I was making this," thought Jessie; "and yet it has been such a pleasure. Every stitch has had some corresponding thought. I wonder if he will like it entirely. I hope he won't tell any one where it came from. I hope he won't quiz me about it. I don't think he is so fond of quizzing me as he used to be, though he likes it just as well with the other girls. Well, I will lock it up once more, and to-morrow night put it on his desk."

She turned to replace it, when she was startled by the sudden barking of the house-dog, and she heard—was it fancy?—Harley's suppressed voice, saying—"Down, Rio, down!"

The evening was warm, and the window on the side of the outer entrance was open. Jessie timidly approached it and leaned out. Her hand was grasped by Harley.

"Hush, dear Jessie," he said. "Are they all in bed?"

"Yes."

"Then open the door for me—but take care, make no sound."

Jessie had had but one glance, in a dim light, at Harley, but she saw he was deadly pale and painfully agitated; and, with a fluttering heart, she opened the door. Harley came in. He did not, as was his custom at meeting,—for they had lived together as brother and sister,—embrace Jessie; he did not speak to her, but stood vacantly gazing around the room. It was one of those moments of

deep emotion, when the outward pressure is so strong that sense and feeling are thrown back to their inner chambers, and every entrance to them closed. Jessie was the first to speak, and her voice, all tears, crying to him—"Harley, what is the matter?—do speak," recalled him to himself, and he threw his arms around her, laid his face on her shoulder, and wept freely.

"Oh, Jessie, Jessie," he exclaimed, "I am expelled from college—ruined, wretched!"

Jessie sank into a chair, and for a moment a deadly faintness came over her; but in a moment, and putting aside Harley's hand and the Eau de Cologne that he had snatched from the mantel to dash over her, she said—

"Tell me, Harley, what does this mean? I can bear it now."

"I have no time to tell my story, Jessie. It is a long one. I have been the leader in a series of follies. We have been lighting bonfires, breaking windows, ducking one of our classmates who turned spy, and contemning the authority in various ways. I am believed to be the worst offender. I am not; but I will not inform against him who is, and he has not the justice to confess, so he escapes with a light punishment, and I am expelled!"

Expelled! The word rung like a sentence of fatal doom in Jessie's ears.

"How father will feel! Oh, dear Harley, how could you!"

"I do not know how I could, Jessie, with your father's displeasure and unhappiness before me; and you—I mean all you girls—having once experienced the misery I inflicted on you. But you cannot know, in this quiet, secluded home, what it is to be with a parcel of mad-cap boys, wild spirits in our breasts, every excitement like a spark to gunpowder, and no wise elder friend to extend to us gentle caution and generous sympathy, the only restraint we can endure. I do not mean to excuse myself. No—I have made up my mind to bear the consequences of my folly; but I think if the faculty had a little of the vigilance, the patience, the tenderness and the forbearance of parents, they might, with divine power, rebuke and calm the troubled sea of our youth. But there is no use now in my blaming any one but myself."

"But, Harley," said Jessie, in a faint voice, "tell me that you have done nothing bad."

"Nothing, on my honour, Jessie; nothing that you will call bad. My follies are bad enough. I have written to your father an exact history of the whole affair. You will read it, Jessie. You will forgive me, for you cannot help it. I have not asked your father's forgiveness, nor will I till I have earned it. Oh, Jessie! the misery of offending, wounding, distressing such a friend, is beyond all expression. I cannot bear it."

And again Harley burst into a flood of tears. Jessie wept too; she knew that Harley's conscience would not magnify her father's disappointment and displeasure.

"When I am gone," continued Harley.

"*"Gone! Where are you going? What do you mean?"*

"I cannot tell you where, Jessie—do not ask me. I will not lessen my punishment by leaving open any possible communication with you. I go to strive, to work—not for money, but that I may, by hard discipline, gain self-control, self-respect, and something more than your father's forgiveness—his approbation. I have lost it, and I cannot look him in the face."

"But, Harley——"

"Do not, Jessie, do not, I beg you, say one word to dissuade me. I am sure I am doing right."

"But you know, Harley, you are always too hasty."

"I have not been now, Jessie. I will tell you all. But four days have passed since I received my sentence. Since then, I have not consciously slept, except during my journey here. I have spent my nights in reflection and preparation. I have prayed to God, Jessie, for light and strength, and every hour that has passed I have felt more and more assured that my decision was a right one."

Harley paused.

"I have made every important arrangement. One of my friends has lent me all the money I shall want, and I have given him a draft on your father. My resolution has not wavered for a moment;—but I could not go without seeing you, Jessie."

Jessie's tears were falling fast.

"Oh, Harley," she said, "if you will go, tell me when it is possible you may come home again."

"Possibly in three years."

"Three years, Harley?"

"Do not look for me in less. It cannot be less—it may be more. If any great misfortune happens to me, be sure you shall hear it. If you hear nothing, be sure all is going well with me."

"But, Harley, dear Harley, surely you could write to us without date of time or place."

"No, no, I have appointed my own trial, and I will bear it to the uttermost."

"We have not chosen ours, Harley. Surely you ought to lessen it."

"I cannot, Jessie. It does not signify talking—wherever I go, it makes no difference; my heart is here. You—I——"

Again the current of life and feeling flowed back, and Harley stood with his eye fixed and glazed.

"Harley!" said Jessie, taking his hand in both hers.

The feeling of that soft, loved hand, renewed him. He drew a ring from his finger.

"Will you wear this, Jessie," he asked, in a low, imploring voice, "while I am gone?"

She gave him her right hand.

"Not that, the other—the finger for your marriage ring, Jessie."

Jessie gave him the other hand. Their eyes met while he drew on the ring, and in those eyes were sweet confessions and holy vows registered in

heaven. Not one word was spoken—not one was needed. Each saw into the other's heart—each was assured of the love, faith and constancy of the other. True, they were scarcely past their childhood; but if their love had not the dignity of maturity and experience, it had freshness, innocence and trust, all undimmed by the world, all bright with those clouds of glory that hang around youth.

No—not one word was spoken. They stood for a moment locked in each other's arms. Harley then broke away, and sunk on his knees before the chair of his benefactor. There he breathed a silent, fervent prayer. He leant his throbbing brow on its arm; he kissed it—he wet it with his tears. As he rose, Jessie slipped the portfolio into his hand; and, at the next instant, the wide chasm of separation opened, and Harley was gone—and days, and months, and years were to wear away before they hoped again to meet.

Harley's footsteps had scarcely died away on Jessie's ear, when she heard her father coming from his room. There was no way of escape without meeting him full in the face, and she betook herself to a temporary shelter in a pantry, where, when her father entered the parlour, she appeared to be busily occupied in arranging the china.

"Jessie," said he, "see here a moment. Come, I have something that will please you. I believe I am as much a child as any of you. I could not go to sleep till I had shown it to you. How comes this window up?"

He went to the window to close it.

"There's a chaise at the gate. I'll just go out and see what it means."

Jessie started forth from her retreat, and was on the point of exclaiming, "Oh don't, father!" when Mr. Oliphant shut down the window, saying—

"It is some person who had just tied his horse to our post. He is driving off."

Jessie returned to the pantry.

"What are you at there, Jessie? Leave off that eternal jingling, and come here. You don't care, perhaps, to see my present for Harley? Oh, come, come."

There was no resource, and poor Jessie came.

"Why, my child, what is the matter?" said Mr. Oliphant, struck by her deadly paleness and swollen eyes.

It was impossible for Jessie to feign, or any longer to repress the expression of her misery. She burst into a paroxysm of crying, and locking her arms around her father's neck, she said—

"Don't ask me any thing to-night. To-morrow you will know all."

"But, Jessie, my dear child, you must tell me now. I cannot live till morning with this horrible fear of some unknown misery. Has any thing happened to Harley?"

"Oh father," she replied, choking between every word, "he is expelled! He has done nothing vicious, father, but he is expelled. To-morrow you will know all."

And, longing as she did to speak a word that

might recall Harley, ere too late, she burst from her father and fled to her own room.

If the young could know the misery their levity inflicts on those burdened with the weight of years, and their certain accumulations of sorrows and anxieties, consideration would sooner "like an angel come." Mr. Oliphant passed a sad and wakeful night, but still, through all its silent watches, came back upon him with cheering, those words from lips that had never spoken untruth to him—"He has done nothing vicious, father." And, from his troubled spirit, amidst vexation, disappointment and grief, there rose a prayer of thanksgiving.

Three years ran away, and, except a slow fever which, as her sisters thought, seized Jessie most remarkably on the very night before the "horrid news" came from Harley; except that fever which, like all "slow fevers," seemed forever coming to an end, life had flowed on smoothly with the Oliphants. Harley had so far relented in his first stern resolution, (sternness was not Harley's quality par excellence,) as to cause to be transmitted to them once in six months, the information that he was well and prospering. Jessie did not laugh as often and as merrily as before Harley's departure; but she was neither melancholy nor moping. She acquired knowledge as if there were present pleasure as well as future use in the acquisition; and she performed her duties, not as if duty were task-work, but as the life-work to be cheerfully done.

After some deliberation and some effort, it must be confessed, Jessie had disclosed to her father—her earthly providence—every particular of Harley's last visit to her. She withheld nothing, but in few and plain words, told the true story of her heart. From the moment of this unusual confidence, there grew up the most tender sympathy between the father and daughter. There were the vigilance and tenderness of a lover in his manners to her; and in her feeling towards him, the repose of a child on its mother's bosom.

The three years and a little more that had passed since Harley's flight, brought the eve of the New Year. New Year had been always kept in the Oliphant family, with all the pleasant observances that belong to the festival. Even the old take heart of hope and good resolution, as they reach the eminence in time, where a new blank term opens before them, to be better filled than any that has preceded it. And the young are happy without beguiling themselves with any such illusion. Their serene spirits reflect every thing bright and happy around them. The joyous wishes that ring in their ears are, to their faith, as sure as promises. Gifts, the signs of love, are dropping from all sides into their laps; their cup of blessing is full and sparkling at the brim.

Mr. Oliphant, according to the good old custom, was settling up his accounts for the year, and was only long enough with his children to snatch a hasty dinner. They all observed that he appeared

uncommonly happy. Jessie often met his eyes fixed on her, and sparkling with inexplicable meaning, and once he dropped his knife and fork and unconsciously snapped his fingers. His youngest little girl exclaimed—

"Father, I know it has just come into your head what you will give some of us. Father blushes—I guessed right."

"Nearly right, Fan," replied her father; "for I was thinking of my gift for you all."

"What—all of us the same thing, all in one lump?"

"Yes."

"But how shall we divide it?"

"As you please—only be sure and give the largest share to Jessie."

"Oh, it's a plum-cake, father," said little Fanny.

"Better than that," replied Mr. Oliphant, smiling.

"Father never gives us plum-cake, you know, Fan," interposed Mary. "I almost know what it is," she continued, whispering to Kate. "Engravings from father's portrait, to match those he gave us from mother's last year."

"But we could not cut those up," sagaciously suggested Fanny, who had placed her ear close to her sister's lips. "No, it's new silk frocks for us all—is it not, father?"

"Better, far better than that, Fanny. But guessing is not fair, so wait till to-morrow, and if you are not satisfied, I will exchange my gift for any thing you will ask of me, though it be a purse full of gold, a diamond ring, or a baby-house from May's, Fan, furnished to order."

Jessie's imagination, as well as her sisters', was excited by her father's significant animation, and the pensiveness that usually overshadowed her at the recurrence of a family festival, when her eye seemed forever resting on the vacant space once filled by Harley, was somewhat diminished. She set about her busy doings for the New Year's morning, with an enjoying spirit. "Coming events cast their shadows before them." Do they not sometimes irradiate the forward path?

The German custom of "the tree" had been adopted by the Oliphants from their early childhood, and had to them all the charm of a native production. New Year's day was its season, and then it stood rooted in the midst of the library, from which every ray of daylight was excluded, that the tree and its precious fruit might be illuminated by lamp-light. The elder girls were getting a little beyond the illusion of artificial lights, but they still adhered to them from the charm of association. Since Harley's departure, they had by common consent, provided gifts for him as usual, and each year Jessie had embalmed them with her tears, and stood them in the closet of his sad, empty room.

The happy New Year morning came, bright without, and brighter within. Wishes and kisses, and sparkling glances were interchanged, and the moment approached for opening the library door. The piano had been placed at the head of the room,

an important part of the customary ceremony being for Jessie to slip in before the general advent, take her station at the instrument and strike up a chant, which was the signal for the opening of the door, and the marching in of the family procession—the father and little Fan at the head, and the servants, full and happy partners in the fête, at the tail. In this order, they made the circuit of the laden tree, paused and finished out their chant, and then plucked and distributed the fruit.

When Jessie entered the library, she cast an involuntary glance at the limb appropriated to Harley. It was richly garnished, and underneath lay the accumulated gifts of the two preceding years, surmounted by the very book her father had shown her on the fatal night of Harley's last visit, in which were bound up the most precious letters of his parents, with a fine crayon drawing from a lovely picture of his mother, for a frontispiece. Jessie knew it at a glance. She had shed many a tear upon it, and wasted many a wish that poor Harley could have taken it with him to soothe the pains of his exile. The sight of it, and of the pile beneath it, which her father must have placed there, sent a rush of thoughts through her brain; and as she sat down to the instrument, her fingers moved mechanically and so faintly over the keys, that the children in the next room disputed, for a moment, whether it were the piano or distant music in the street. But in another instant, Jessie thought—"Oh, what a fool I am!" and, sending back the rushing tide to her heart, she struck the notes with all her wonted force, and began the chant with the full swell of her sweet voice. The door opened, and the happy procession entered. After it, and alone, glided in a tall form, and took its station just within the door, while the train, all joining in the chant, slowly passed around the tree. The children's eyes were naturally riveted on it, eager to spy out their father's mysterious gift, and they were all fairly round before the unexpected guest was seen; and then what a flash of surprise, what a burst of joy—what a tumult of welcome!

"Harley! Harley! It is, it is Harley!" and crying and screaming, and laughing, mingled with the servants—"God bless us, it is our Mr. Harley!" Little Fan jumped into his arms, and locked hers around his neck. Ellen, Mary and Kate, clung to him. His eye turned from them all, and met Jessie's as she was attempting to rise from the instrument. Her head was reeling, and her sight uncertain, and, but for her father, who, seeing her mortal paleness, rushed towards her and caught her in his arms, she would have fallen to the floor. Water was brought, and when her senses were returning, Mr. Oliphant sent away the children and servants, and putting Jessie's hand in Harley's, and kissing her, he said—

"I should have prepared you, my child, for my New Year's gift; but never mind, a fainting fit is soon over—but a slight cloud on the happiest morning of our lives."

And gently placing her cheek on Harley's bosom, he left them together.

A few sentences will tell the brief and honourable history of Harley's absence. His best friend, next to the Oliphants, was a rich merchant in the Canton trade, a man of experience and generosity. To him he had recourse at the moment of his college disgrace. He begged for a seaman's berth in one of his ships. His friend remonstrated against the suddenness of his decision, but finding him fixed upon a course by which he might regain the confidence of his benefactor, and discipline himself by the patient endurance of toil and hardship, he sent him before the mast to Canton, with instructions to his agent there to give him such employments as he was capable of filling well, and to advance him according to his merit. Sternness was no quality of Harley's character, and he relented so far, in his first hasty decision, as to request his merchant friend simply to inform Mr.

Oliphant, at the end of every six months, that he was alive and doing well. If he first conceived his enterprise from an impetuous and sensitive temper, the vigour and virtue he put into it, made it work well. He passed nearly two years in China, in successive profitable occupations, and then, having saved money enough to defray his expenses, he returned and spent a year in Germany, most industriously availing himself of the various and best means of instruction there, where they are best. At the end of the three years of self-expatriation and trials, he stood again at his benefactor's hearth, a mature and well-developed man in mind and body, and was received with open arms, and the confiding affection of a father—a relation that Mr Oliphant before long was destined really as well as virtually to bear to him.

THE CONFIRMED BACHELOR.

BY MYSELF.

Benedick. I do much wonder, that one man, seeing how much another man is a fool when he dedicates his behaviours to love, will, after he hath laughed at such shallow follies in others, become the argument of his own scorn, by falling in love.—*Much Ado about Nothing.*

"WELL, Mary, is there no end to that letter you are reading? I have been waiting fifteen minutes for my second cup of coffee."

"Excuse me, brother—I am really so overjoyed at its contents that I forgot your cup."

"Overjoyed! strange kind of overjoy, crying as fast as you can. But that is the way with you women, there is no understanding you—pshaw, sister, you have emptied the sugar-bowl into my cup. If," said her brother rising from the table, "people would write letters of a proper length, there would not be such a waste of valuable time in reading them—as if a half dozen lines could not say all that was necessary."

"You don't ask whom my letter is from, brother. You do not know how much you are interested in its contents."

"Oh! from some love-sick girl, telling you of all the conquests she has made at the last ball, and how many declarations followed."

"You were never more mistaken in your life; there is not a word about lovers in the whole letter. Fanny Thorn is no love-sick maiden, but a—"

"Oh! no doubt a very charming interesting lady, like all your sex, Mary. But it's nine o'clock and I must go; a man of business stopping to chat with a girl like you."

"But business or no, brother," said Mary, with an affectionate smile, "you must waste a little time to hear my letter—and a woman's letter too."

"What can a bachelor like myself have to do with your letter; but hurry, child, I have a dozen things to attend to before court opens."

"Well then," said Mary a little diffidently, "my letter says, my dear friend Fanny Thorn will be here the day after to-morrow to pay me a visit of two months."

"Let her come, Mary. I do not wish to interfere with your plans, your happiness. Only remember I am a man of business; and besides, I am a confirmed bachelor—an unchangeable Benedick; so that you and your friend must take care of yourselves—no attentions from me, sister. Do as pleases yourself, and let me do the same.—Two young ladies in the house," said her soliloquizing brother, "how the deuce am I to get along with them?" and with this puzzling point in his mind Henry Dorrance, attorney at law, entered his comfortable office rooms, and in a few minutes had totally forgotten that there was such a thing as a woman in the world.

Henry and Mary Dorrance were brother and sister, and had been separated from each other ever since the death of their mother, which took place when Mary was ten years old. Henry was the eldest of several children, all of whom died except Mary, the youngest, the darling of her mother and the plaything of the tall handsome man, her brother, who for some years had been established as a lawyer in the town of Bedford. Mrs. Dorrance, on her death-bed, called her son to her and told him to write to his aunt, a widowed sister of his mother who lived about two hundred miles distant, and to say that her dying request was to fulfil a promise long since made, that if her child was left motherless she would become a mother to her, and that now she committed to her the sacred trust, with full confidence in her affection and faithfulness. Henry wept bitter tears before he could comply with her commands; for his mother was dearer to him than "ought beside;" and now to realize that he was to lose her, his best counsellor, his affectionate friend and parent, one who had so often cheered and sustained him under difficulties, wrung his heart with grief, and the man and the lawyer were overpowered by the deep affliction of the son. After a few days of suffering Mrs. Dorrance died; her last look of affection rested upon her two children who stood by her bedside. She had placed her hand for a moment on the head of the bewildered Mary, and ere it was raised she had ceased to breathe.

After the sad ceremonies for the departed were ended, Henry had another painful duty to perform, to take his little sister to her new home. How much did he wish she was to remain with him, and how sorrowful and lonely did he feel, as he saw the preparations for her departure. On the journey he found her becoming dearer to him than ever, and he was only induced to leave her with his aunt by the remembrance of his mother's request. Mary threw her arms round his neck, and said he should never leave her; but when the violence of her grief overcame her she was gently forced away, Henry kissing her again and again, and telling her that when she was a woman she should come and keep his house.

Years passed on and the brother at first wrote frequently and tenderly to his sister, but as the duties of his profession increased, he became so absorbed by them, as to become forgetful of his sister, and regardless of the claims which society had upon him. He avoided marriage, and though proverbial

his indifference to female fascinations, the eminent lawyer of Bedford was still regarded by the ladies as a matrimonial speculation of the first quality. When his letter of a half a dozen lines was sent to Mary it still bore the same heading, "My dear little sister," for in his abstraction he had totally forgotten that she was any thing else; so that he was roused and somewhat bewildered on receiving a letter from the town where she lived, stating the sudden decease of his aunt, and requesting that he would immediately come to his sister, who was overwhelmed with grief at her loss.

His kindly feelings were moved at the mention of his sister's sorrow, and he sat out on the journey with alacrity; and when he found in that sister a tall, graceful, handsome girl of twenty-two, with all the intelligence of his mother in her face, he felt like a new being, and it seemed as if he was once more the young man leaning again on a mother's counsel and love. In her aunt, Mary Dorrance found all that she had lost in her mother, so that under her wise, pious direction, she was charming both in person and mind, free from affectation of manners, and pure and elevated in her pursuits. There was now no relative left to her except her brother, and under his roof she must henceforth obtain protection. With a comfortable fortune of her own she was independent; but there she must be, notwithstanding the bachelor had a great many embarrassing thoughts as to how it would be possible for him to get along with one of *that* sex that he had classed as troublesome and trifling. He did not hesitate, however, to assure the weeping girl that he would both protect and love her, with a brother's true affection. He immediately wrote to a friend to have a house prepared for his return so that it might suit a "bachelor" and his sister, and leaving the arrangement wholly to his taste and judgment.

After an absence of about two weeks he returned to Bedford, and established Mary as mistress of his house, and she had been in that office nearly six months, when the conversation we have related took place at the breakfast table.

Mary had felt deeply her aunt's death, and with it the loss of the society of all those dear friends among whom she had lived so happily. The sister of Mr. Dorrance did not want for civilities of a flattering character in her new position, and she received and reciprocated them with good breeding and gratitude; but still her affectionate heart missed the dear old friends she had been taken from, and in the necessary loneliness of a bachelor's home, sighed often for their pleasant society, and for none more so than that of Fanny Thorn. No wonder then that her joy was great, to learn that it was now in Fanny's power to visit her. They were congenial in taste and character, had been companions from childhood, and were friends out of pure esteem for the worth which each saw the other to possess. When Mr. Dorrance returned to dinner, he appeared to have no recollection of Fanny's intended visit, though Mary asked him many questions about the weather, the safety of railroads and

the time of the cars coming in. He answered her, and then said it was natural he believed for ladies to ask questions, and yet as he left the room he was struck by the very happy and lovely expression of her countenance.

The next morning proved fair and bright as Mary's hopes; she had not slept soundly and fancied she had much to do.

As she handed her brother his coffee she said, "To-morrow we shall be a trio at breakfast, and I hope my brother is prepared to be very agreeable to my friend Fanny."

"Agreeable, Mary! What do you mean? That I am to flatter and talk nonsense to your friend? Suppose I take breakfast in my own room. With you, Mary, I have managed to get along; but with another lady, I cannot see how it is to be done. She will expect me to bow, compliment and offer my arm on every occasion. I cannot do it. My mind must not be cobwebbed by such trifles. Do not look so sad, Mary. Make Miss Thorn as welcome as you can. Act freely, only no attentions from me."

"But, brother, Miss Thorn will not feel pleasant to know she has driven you from your breakfast table; besides, it will be uncivil."

"Miss Thorn, my dear Mary, will have to learn that I am a man of business, and have no time to waste on ladies. I told you, sister, that you would not like a bachelor's ways. Women do so many things that there is no use of doing, that a man of business who knows the value of time can scarcely get along with them. Women ought to live a great deal longer than men; for twenty years of their life is not equal to ten of a man's, they trifle so."

"But still, Henry," said Mary, her beautiful eyes involuntarily filling with tears, "I must insist upon your not altering your old practice of breakfasting with me; do not, for my sake, I entreat you."

"Well, if that will satisfy you, I won't." And heaving a deep sigh, as if he had a presage of further evils, he said, "I hope that this is all."

"All for the present, brother," said Mary, laughing. "I shall see you at dinner."

"No, not at dinner, for I am obliged to go out of town on the Green-Hill business, and will not be in until late in the evening."

Fanny Thorn arrived safely in the town and was welcomed amid the smiles and tears of the warm-hearted Mary. They embraced again and again and kissed each other with all the ardour of the purest kind of love. Mary conducted her friend to the apartment she had prepared for her reception, and there they poured out their hearts, the one totally forgetting that her brother was to be no abettor in all her plans, and the other unconscious that she was an inmate of the house of the most important gentleman in the neighbourhood—the celebrated Mr. Dorrance—still a bachelor in defiance of the ladies.

It will not be worth while to tell what the ladies said between their meeting and tea-time, lest some of my readers might charge the fair couple with

trifling, which Mr. Dorrance pronounced to be the province of women; but never tea-table was graced by two lovelier maidens than that of the invulnerable Mr. Dorrance.

"I must apologize for the absence of my brother. Business of importance has called him out of town, and I shall not have the pleasure of presenting you to him until morning; but he desired me to make you perfectly at home."

"He is very kind, Mary; but is he at all like you? What must I expect to see? You wrote me word he was a 'confirmed bachelor.' Has he been deceived by one of our sex, and therefore emptied his ink bottle over the whole of us?"

"Oh no—he has lived apart from the influence of females since the death of my dear mother, and has denounced us all as a body of triflers—harmless I believe he thinks we are, but rather an unnecessary part of creation."

"Well then, what we do will make no impression on him—he it good or ill—he will range it under the gems, trifles—and so let it pass."

"Oh yes—he is very kind to me; but as he says in his odd way, I am his sister, and take attention or do without it as a matter of course."

"And that circumstance is no fault of his. But your house is in very good taste, and your piano of excellent tone," said Fanny as she rose from the table and ran her fingers over the keys.

Mary was soon at her side and they sang together all their old songs as they were wont to do in the large old-fashioned parlour of their aunt at Taunton.

On entering the breakfast-room the next morning, Mary was somewhat surprised to find her brother already there reading the morning paper. She led Fanny forward, and with a sweetness and affection that might have awakened a sympathy in the bosom of old Cato, said, "My dear brother, allow me to present Miss Thorn to you, or in other words, my friend Fanny, that you have heard so much about."

Mr. Dorrance rose, bowed, and lawyer as he was, stammered and was embarrassed by the presence of the lovely girl who stood before him. He soon, however, regained his composure, and made the usual inquiries as to Miss Thorn's journey, her health, and hoped Mary would make her visit agreeable. They were soon seated at the breakfast-table. Mr. Dorrance seemed scarcely to know whether he was to pursue his old plan of reading as he sipped his coffee. The ladies talked as if he were not present, and had he looked up he would have seen a mischievous smile in Mary's eyes occasioned by his perplexity, which she in vain tried to conceal. He got through the breakfast, and Mary thought she heard him give a sigh of relief as he closed the door. Certain it is that he looked round his office rooms that morning with an air of peculiar satisfaction to find nothing that in any degree resembled a woman, and turned over the pages of his books with a feeling of luxury. "These speak," said the bachelor, "without tongues."

"Your brother is by no means an ogre, Mary,

or any thing like the beast that Beauty lived with; but a handsome, intelligent looking gentleman. When I know him better I shall venture to inquire to 'what dread cause' we owe his aversion to our sex."

"Not only intelligent looking, but really so. If we could open his eyes to regard 'Heaven's last best gift' as he ought, what a charming addition he would be to our society."

Days passed by, and Miss Thorn had become quite accustomed to the grave manner of Mr. Dorrance. She could laugh as lightly and sing as sweetly in his presence as if he were some lifeless statue "who had ears and heard not." But ears he had, and eyes too, and though the book or paper was always in his hands, yet his thoughts were oftener occupied with the two ladies of his house than with the contents of either. They were problems he could not solve. They talked so much about incidents unworthy a thought, their movements were so rapid and light, and they were always pleased. It was a mystery to him what they were made of.

One morning as Mary and he were alone, Fanny having gone out, her brother remarked, "I thought you said Miss Thorn was entirely unacquainted in our town."

"So she was, before her visit."

"Why, Mr. Grey speaks of her as though he knew her very intimately, and detained me a long time yesterday with a tirade of congratulations on my having so delightful a lady an inmate of my house, asking me what I thought of the contour of her face—her voice—her conversational powers—her form—when, in fact"—

"When, in fact, my dear brother did not know that she possessed any thing worth looking at, or listening to. Mr. Grey is not so insensible to female charms as Mr. Dorrance, and yet Mr. Grey is no trifter. Fanny is riding with him this morning."

"Riding! Has Grey nothing more to do than ride with the ladies? His prospects are fine, but such proceedings will ruin them. And moreover, he is, he told me, far from expert at driving. Miss Thorn is not safe with him."

"Do not be concerned; they are on horseback; and if you could have seen how exceedingly lovely Fanny looked when mounted, even you would have wished Mr. Grey anywhere else than by her side."

Mr. Dorrance was silent for a few minutes. "It is strange, Mary, when I have a carriage, that you should not have mentioned the pleasure I would have in driving her out. It seems you have no proper idea of things. I am acquainted with all the drives round the country, and Miss Thorn ought to see them before she leaves you."

"Oh Fanny has been to them all."

"All? When and with whom?"

"Mr. Grey and other gentlemen," said Mary, laughing as her brother closed the door muttering, "The deuce take Grey—he had better have been in his office."

We cannot divine why, but during dinner Mr.

Dorrance certainly looked very often at Fanny while she talked of her pleasant ride with Mr. Grey.

"Miss Thorn, my carriage is at the service of yourself and my sister whenever you desire to ride," said Mr. Dorrance, with an easier and more sociable manner than he had ever yet assumed towards her.

Fanny thanked him, and insensibly they fell into a conversation concerning scenery and buildings, and the difference between town and country pursuits, until Mary said it was four o'clock, and the bachelor, with an embarrassed air, at the thought of conversing an hour with a lady, rose and bowed to them as he left the room.

While Mr. Dorrance had been so indifferent to Miss Thorn and her charms, they had been fully appreciated by his friends. Mr. Grey was not the first who had spoken to him of her beauty, and whether he was piqued into noticing Fanny, or whether he feared he had not been sufficiently polite to an inmate of his own house, we cannot say; but certainly henceforth he lingered longer at the table, and even was guilty of a few little acts of gallantry to the ladies.

After dinner, one day, he threw some concert tickets on the table and said, "The concert of to-night promises much. There are tickets for Miss Thorn and yourself."

"Oh thank you, brother, but how shall we get there? unless Mr. Grey or some one comes in, we shall have no escort."

"Why, is it too entirely unfashionable for one gentleman to attend to two ladies?"

"But we have not one," said Mary, hesitating, "unless you spend an evening for once in so useless a manner."

"Of course, Mary, I intend going. I once thought you had more quickness than most of your sex; but I do not know what is the matter with you; you are dull at comprehending the most simple thing."

"Oh, remember I am only Miss Dorrance, not Mr.," said Mary laughing, as she ran up stairs to Fanny.

"What wonder next, Fanny? My brother asks you to sing after breakfast, brings concert tickets after dinner, and accompanies us in propria persona after tea. Oh, my confirmed bachelor brother, I begin to have hopes of you after all."

The concert was delightful; Fanny and Mary two of the greatest beauties there, and Mr. Dorrance the most envied of men.

As they prepared for sleep, Fanny said, "Really, Mary, your brother was almost as agreeable as Mr. Grey."

"I had little opportunity of judging," replied Mary in a sleepy tone, and the conversation ended.

To Mary's deep regret there remained but one week of Fanny's visit; nearly two months since she came. Why does time when we are happy travel on so quickly? How they counted the hours when they must part to meet again, under such pleasant circumstances perhaps no more.

"With your approbation, Henry, I shall have a number of friends, to spend Wednesday evening with me before my dear Fanny leaves me."

"Just as you please, my little sister; but why must Miss Thorn go so soon? Is she weary of this place and its gaieties?"

"Fanny has only one sister, and she is a deeply afflicted one. To be away any longer, she says would be heartless and unkind.—I suppose I shall have your company if not your assistance on Wednesday. Mr. Grey, knowing your distaste for such things, has offered his services."

"Mr. Grey has grown officious," said Mr. Dorrance, pettishly; "I don't see how he can know any thing of my tastes and distastes."

"Oh," said Mary, colouring, "he meant no offence; I thought you esteemed Mr. Grey as one remarkable for every virtue."

"Esteem him? So I do; but he need not interfere with my duties."

Every thing in the way of preparation went on well; but a few refusals came, and Fanny and Mary were beyond description beautiful as they stood together to receive their guests for the evening. Many bright eyes, fair forms, and light hearts filled the rooms of Mr. Dorrance, and by many was the question asked, "Will Mr. Dorrance favour us with his company?"

Mary herself felt anxious for his appearance, and cast her eyes frequently towards the door.

"So many of his friends are here, Fanny, he will surely come. It is so contrary to etiquette for him to be absent without a cause."

"Without a cause, Mary? Cast your eyes around on the array of female beauty and fascination, and then say if there is no cause for the absence of an 'unchangeable Benedick,' 'a confirmed bachelor.' He dare not trust himself here lest he be made captive against his will."

"I come to claim your hand, Miss Thorn," said Mr. Grey, looking the perfection of elegance as he led her out to the dance. "Pray, what were you and your friend discussing? the subject has heightened your bloom."

"What we have often done before, finding fault with your sex."

"Our sex is grateful for being noticed on any terms by such ladies."

Just then there was a slight whispering, and Mary saw that her brother's entrance occasioned both surprise and pleasure. She looked at him with admiration. He had certainly paid some extra attention to his dress, and was conspicuous for his fine form and intelligent face.

"Well, my little sister, how are you succeeding in your evening entertainment. To prevent a scolding to-morrow I have come among you—I did not know Miss Thorn danced. I thought she had too much mind for such frivolity; and Grey by her side. After capering about to-night like a grasshopper, how is he fit to come into court on serious business to-morrow?"

"Why, Henry! I shall tell Fanny to what you have compared her partner. Mr. Grey like a grasshopper!—and pray what is Miss Thorn like?"

"Oh, I cannot possibly tell you what she is like,

without it is a chameleon. Now Miss Thorn this morning was a reasonable conversant being, and to night—"

"She is the same," said Mary, interrupting him, "with only a vast increase of personal charms—Do come quickly, Fanny, Henry is complimenting you this evening. Mr. Grey, you have had a share too, and if you do not offer me your arm for a short promenade, I shall have my turn in the hearing of you all."

"A compliment from Mr. Dorrance," said Fanny pleasantly; "I must make a note of it, if I can only tempt you to repeat it."

"Mary's spirits are high, and Miss Thorn's ears are familiar with compliments," said the bachelor, somewhat confused.

What was the subject of his conversation with Miss Thorn we do not know; whether of the folly of dancing, and especially with Mr. Grey; whether of mind, matter, clouds, sunsets or poetry; but they conversed about something until the company separated, each declaring it was an agreeable evening.

But a day or two remained of Fanny's visit, and her lovely manners, so devoid of pretensions beyond her merit, had made her coming departure a matter of regret to all who knew her. Parting civilities flowed in upon her.

"Miss Thorn does not return alone," said Mr. Dorrance to his sister.

"Of course not."

"Is any one coming for her?"

"Oh no. Mr. Grey will accompany her."

"Mr. Grey does every thing. I should suppose propriety would have induced her to have preferred your brother."

"Mr. Grey has business in that direction; besides, we did not suppose for one moment it would suit you to go."

"Has Mr. Grey any particular claim on Miss Thorn that he is always at her side?"

"You must ask Fanny yourself, or shall I ask her for you?" said Mary, archly.

"Nonsense, Mary, why should I want to know? It is of no importance to me."

The parting of the two friends I will not describe. Many tears flowed, ere either of them could say farewell. Fanny was exceedingly pale, and Mr. Dorrance again and again expressed his fears that she was not well and had better defer her journey for a few days. None seemed happy save Mr. Grey, and when the carriage door closed, he looked out of the window and nodded to Mr. Dorrance, who still remained at the door, with an expression that seemed to say, do you not envy me?

"Grey has become a perfect coxcomb," said Mr. Dorrance as he walked in and slammed the door behind him.

For a few days the house was silent and sad. Mr. Dorrance appeared as if he was looking for some familiar object each time he came in. At length letters came. All were well. No accidents on the road. Mr. Grey was very kind, and would return in a few days. Mary told her brother, who said he was very happy to hear it.

Mr. Grey had been at home for more than a month. All marks of sadness had disappeared from Mary's face, and she had fallen into her old routine of duties, when her brother, who had been particularly restless that morning, entered the parlour for the fifth time and said "Mary, what think you of a short visit to Taunton?"

"Delightful, brother! Who is going?"

"Why I am going, Mary; it never occurs to you that I am to do any thing. I have particular business there, and I suppose your friend Fanny will be glad to see you, though you are not accompanied by the fascinating Mr. Grey."

"You never appreciate Fanny. When you see her in the midst of her own family, so amiable, so loved, you may learn to do so too."

Mr. Dorrance coloured and said, "Don't be angry, Mary, but be ready for our journey in two days."

They arrived at Taunton, and Mary was left at Mr. Thorn's, while Mr. Dorrance drove on and took lodgings at a hotel. The suit that was to be decided was one of general interest, and the legal acumen of Mr. Dorrance was universally commended. It was soon settled in favour of his client. A week had passed, business was over, and Mary wondered that her brother did not speak of returning. Another week passed, and she told him her arrangements would not admit of a longer stay.

"To-morrow," said Mr. Dorrance, "I am engaged to drive Miss Thorn out. The next day we will leave."

Mr. Dorrance on his return had intended to have stopped at several small towns, on his way; but perhaps his prolonged visit prevented him, as they went directly home. Mary thought her brother was very dull and unobservant on the journey.

They had been at home about a week when Mr. Dorrance came into his sister's room and said, "I have letters for you, Mary."

"From Fanny? There is no post-mark. Who brought them?" exclaimed Mary as she opened them.

Her brother closely watched her varying countenance as she read—aye, more closely than he had ever watched a legal opponent while speaking.

"You to be married!" cried she springing up and taking her brother's hands—"You to be married in two months—and to dear Fanny! I thought you despised the race. We were triflers, vain, inconsistent chameleons—You; the unchangeable Benedick, to be married. When did you begin to love her?"

"Not till some time after you did Mr. Grey. Fie, sister, not to tell me and I thinking he was Fanny's all the time. But Grey is a fine fellow, and you have my approbation to marry him."

"A grasshopper!" said Mary, demurely.

"Nonsense, Mary, do you never forget any thing?"

"I am quite breathless," said Mary to Mr. Grey the day preceding that on which they were to set off for the wedding. "I've often heard of 'wedding haste;' but the climax of it is when a 'confirmed bachelor' finds it time to be a confirmed husband."

THE BROKEN VOW.

BY MISS ELIZA A. DUPUY, AUTHORESS OF "THE CONSPIRATOR," "WILFUL ONE," ETC.

'Twas murmured not in festive halls,
Where mirth is light around;
It echoed not from stately walls
Blent with the music's sound.
'Twas sighed not forth in bower or dell
Amid the op'ning flowers.
The woodland hath no tale to tell
Of these long vanished hours.

'Twas uttered o'er a dying bed,
Asked by a dying prayer—
The voice of the departing shed
A ghastly blessing there.
An earnest soul was flitting fast
When those deep words were said—
The ling'ring tones her lips that passed
Thrilled hollow o'er the dead.

TWILIGHT was darkening into night, the first faint star of evening gleamed from the far blue heavens, and the hush and repose of nature seemed too holy to be broken by the strife of human passions;—yet how painfully did the quiet of that evening scene contrast with the passionate grief of a young heart, mourning over its first sorrow.

Ellen Sinclair was a newly wedded bride. She was but seventeen; the youngest daughter of her father's house, and the spoiled pet of the whole family, her life had passed as one long bright day of sunshine and flowers. She had been wooed by one she had known from childhood, and with the consent of their mutual friends they were united.

The day after their marriage the bridal pair left her father's house for the residence of Mr. Sinclair in one of the interior counties of Virginia. A few happy weeks passed, when Sinclair proposed to his bride to visit a gorge in the neighbouring mountains, from which the rising sun frequently presents the singular spectacle of the looming of the mountain—the same phenomenon which is witnessed in the Straits of Messina, and known by the more poetic name of Fata Morgana, or the castles of the fairy Morgana. Ellen was delighted with the proposed excursion, and searched every book in the house which afforded any information on the subject.

This excursion, which promised so much pleasure, ended in despair and death. They reached the desired spot in safety. The morning was favourable to their wishes; the ascending vapours caught the rays of the rising sun, and formed themselves into the most gorgeous and fantastic scenes. Ellen was so much absorbed in this wonderful and magnificent spectacle, that she forgot the caution Sinclair had given her at the moment of mounting her spirited steed. He turned from her side an instant to speak to the servant who followed them; the movement startled her horse;—the rein was

lying loose on his neck, and feeling himself free from a guiding hand, he dashed off at full speed. Sinclair and the servant both followed, but were unable to overtake her. Fortunately she met a gentleman who succeeded in stopping her perilous career. Sinclair checked his horse too suddenly, that he might express his thanks to her preserver. The animal reared, and threw him with great violence. He was conveyed home in a senseless state, and surgical assistance hastily summoned, but the force of the fall had inflicted some internal injury which baffled the skill of the physician.

It was beside his bed in that calm twilight, that the young wife knelt with scarce a hue of life upon her features.

"Oh Ellen, my beloved, calm yourself—this sorrow unmans me," murmured the dying man, passing his hands caressingly over the head which was bowed upon his pillow.

A deep suffocated sob was the only reply to his words.

"It is hard to die," he continued, "when I was looking forward to years of such tranquil happiness with you, my sweet Ellen; but 'tis the will of Heaven, my best beloved, and we must submit."

"Oh Henry, my own Henry, you must go down to the cold, cold grave, where I can see you no more—never more hear the tones of your dear voice. Oh, it will break my heart!" was the almost inarticulate reply.

"My poor Ellen, this is a hard trial for you, but you are too young to grieve always. The thought is torture to me, but—even you may love again—may wed another!" and his voice was nearly stifled with painful emotions.

"Never, never! Oh, Henry, how can you harrow my soul at this awful moment with such a supposition! Wed another! Give the wreck of my

buried affections to another! Oh no, no!—the thought would kill me.”

“I doubt not you think so now, love; but time works strange changes in this world of ours. We know not what we may do. I wish to exact no promise from you. The thought is bitterly painful to me, but should your present views change, I do not wish that the reproach of a broken promise should mar your peace of mind.”

“Henry, hear me,” said Ellen, in a solemn tone. “Should I ever so far forget my faith to your ashes as to lend my ear to the language of love, my heart to the voice of affection for another, may your form on my bridal evening come to me and reproach me for my faithlessness.”

A bright smile passed over the face of the dying man. He murmured—

“Repeat those words again, my Ellen;—they take from death its sting—in heaven you will be all my own. Forgive my selfishness, dearest; but I have so loved you, I cannot think that another shall win—”

His voice ceased to articulate, and again the deep tones of the young mourner thrilled the air with the repetition of those awful words. As they passed her lips, she felt the hand that clasped hers relax its grasp—a faint fluttering consciousness seemed to hover a moment on his features, and in another instant they wore the calm and passionless repose of death.

Ellen Sinclair buried herself in the seclusion of her own abode. A calm and gentle melancholy succeeded the first violence of her grief. but she betrayed no desire to mingle with the world. Clad in the deepest mourning, she was seen nowhere but at church; and those who looked on her felt deep sympathy for one so young and so bitterly bereaved. Vainly had her own parents sought to draw her from her solitude. Two years passed, and after many fruitless efforts they at length succeeded in obtaining a promise of a visit from her at the annual reunion of their family at Christmas, for that season is still held as a festival in many parts of Virginia.

Ellen was once more beneath the roof of her father, and many and painful were the emotions which struggled in her bosom when she looked around and remembered that the last time she stood beside her native hearth, she was a gay and happy bride.

Those who looked on her could not avoid remarking the change which two years had wrought in her appearance. The girl just budding into maturity had expanded into the beautiful and self-possessed woman, with a quiet grace of manner, and an air of pensive reserve which was extremely captivating.

Her parents were worldly-minded people, who could not bear that their fair daughter should pass her life in the solitude to which she had doomed herself. They surrounded her with agreeable company, sought to amuse her mind and draw it from

the contemplation of the terrible calamity which had destroyed her dawning hopes of happiness, and they succeeded sufficiently to implant in her mind a distaste to the idea of returning to her late abode.

Week after week passed until months were numbered, and she began to think it her duty to remain with her parents. She was their youngest child, and the only one without ties which severed them in a measure from the paternal roof.

“Ellen, my darling,” said her father, when she spoke of returning home, “you will not again forsake us? We are old, and you are the only child who is free to remain with us. You must live here—I cannot think of permitting you to return to that lonely home of yours.”

“It is lonely,” replied Ellen; “and I fear that after breaking through my usual habits, I shall find it difficult and wearisome to resume them. Yet, my dear father, if I consent to remain, there is one request I must make.”

“What is it, my daughter? Are we not ever mindful of your wishes?”

“Ah yes, dear father, more mindful than I deserve. But”—and her voice sank to a low agitated whisper—“there must be no looking forward to a second marriage for me—no attempt to alter my views on that subject. I have made a vow to the dead, and it must be held sacred.”

“What!” exclaimed her father, “was Sinclair ungenerous enough to exact from you a promise not to marry again?—young and inexperienced as you were, too!”

“Ah no, father—wrong him not. He was too kind, too noble. He asked no promise—I made it voluntarily; and as the words left my lips his spirit departed. Oh no, my father, never ask me to break that vow—it is a hallowed one.”

“Well, my darling, let it be as you wish. I shall prefer keeping you with us; but at the same time, if you should ever meet with one you can love, and who is worthy of you, it will be very silly to suffer a few words uttered when you were scarcely conscious of their meaning, to prevent you from making the home of an honourable man happy. Why, child, you are only nineteen. Do you suppose that the death of one person, however dear, can chill your feelings into ice at that age?”

“I must then in sincerity of soul pray to be delivered from temptation,” said the young widow, with a faint smile, “for I shall never marry again.”

As time passed on, Mrs. Sinclair could not help acknowledging that she was far happier than in her mountain solitude. Her spirits were no longer wearied; she no longer felt that life was a burthen she would gladly lay down. She needed the excitement of society, and the social and highly cultivated neighbourhood in which her father’s residence was situated, afforded every facility for its enjoyment.

The third year of her widowhood was drawing to a close, when she received an invitation to the marriage of a favourite cousin, who would take no refusal. Ellen replied that if the bride would ex-

her sombre dress and pensive face she would attend, and the concession was hailed as an omen of future success in drawing her into that world she was so peculiarly fitted to adorn.

There was a motive for these efforts of which Ellen little dreamed. She regularly attended the church near her father's residence, and her mother had several times called her attention to a remarkably handsome man who sat in a pew nearly opposite to them; but she had not remarked that his eyes frequently wandered from his prayer book to her own fair face. His height, and the turn of his head had reminded her of Sinclair, but there the resemblance ceased. The broad brow, finely chiselled features, and clear dark eye of the stranger, were all unlike the youthful bloom of him who had won her young affections. She frequently heard Mr. Peyton spoken of as a man of distinguished endowments, who had spent several years in the south of Europe with an only and beloved sister, for the benefit of whose health the journey had been vainly undertaken. These circumstances had nearly passed from her mind when she was introduced to him at the wedding as the intimate friend of the groom.

Peyton had fallen in love with her from his casual view of her at church, and the eulogiums of his friend's affianced bride, who looked on Mrs. Sinclair as a "bright particular star," had deepened the impression. The circumstances of her marriage threw a romantic interest around her history, and when he looked on the youthful brow with a shade of placid pensiveness that seemed to breathe a hallowed charm over her beauty, he felt that she was the only woman he had ever known before whom his heart could bow with the homage of affection.

Yet how speak of love to one who still wore the deepest mourning—who never joined in the mirth of the light-hearted? It would seem almost like sacrilege to breathe into *her* ear the wild passion that filled his heart, yet its very hopelessness appeared to add to its fervour.

But ere long a new hope dawned on him. Ellen was surrounded by the gay and the joyous of her own age. Her disposition was naturally buoyant; her spirits rose; the chord she had believed forever snapped again thrilled to the touch of joy. When the bonds of grief were once severed, the reaction was complete. She still revered the memory of her first love, and if her heart had whispered that she could ever be faithless to his ashes, she would have shuddered with superstitious horror at the thought. The possibility of breaking that solemn promise had never occurred to her—but time teaches many strange lessons.

Peyton lingered in the neighbourhood, a constant visitor at Wycombe, but his attentions were not sufficiently marked to attract the observation of others. Her own family were too desirous of the march to hazard the final success of the lover by alluding in any manner to his passion for her.

Peyton won his own way slowly but surely. The fair widow began unconsciously to regret the

vow which had ascended to Heaven with the spirit of her dead husband. At length he spoke of love, and she listened with trembling awe to the outpouring of a spirit which was too noble to be trifled with, and too highly appreciated to be given up without a pang.

He drew from her quivering lips the history of her vow, and divested of every feeling of superstition himself, he could not conceive that a few words uttered in a moment of excited and agonized feeling should stand between him and his hopes of happiness. He did not understand the impressible and imaginative temperament of the being who listened to his reasoning, willing, nay, anxious to be convinced against the evidence of her own feelings.

Her parents agreed with the lover in his views of the case—and urged on all sides, her own heart a traitor, Ellen yielded to their wishes and betrothed herself to Peyton.

As the day appointed for her marriage drew near, the words of her vow appeared to be ever ringing in her ears. With a restless and fearful spirit she saw the hour approach which was to witness her second espousals.

Preparations were made for a splendid bridal. All the members of her family assembled beneath the paternal roof, and every effort was made to divert her mind from dwelling on the fantasy that possessed it.

The appointed evening arrived, and the ceremony which made her the bride of another was performed. Several hours passed in dance and song. It was near midnight when Ellen found herself standing on the portico in the bright moonlight with Peyton beside her. The gay throng within were still dancing, and the sound of merry voices mingled with the bursts of music that swept by on the dewy and fragrant air. Ellen started as Peyton spoke beside her, and for the first time for several hours the recollection of her fatal vow intruded on her mind.

"What a glorious night," she remarked. "I never saw the moon shine with greater splendour."

"May it be a happy omen to us, my fair Ellen," replied Peyton—and as he spoke he turned to a white rose bush which had wreathed itself around one of the pillars of the portico, and culled several of its half-blown flowers.

While he was thus employed, Ellen was gazing abstractedly on the fantastic shadows made by the trees in the yard. Suddenly she grasped the railing for support, and looked with eyes fascinated with terror on a white shade which seemed to rise from an open space on which the moon's radiance was poured without obstruction from the surrounding shrubbery. The shadow arose slowly, and gradually assumed the waving outline of a human form wrapped in the garments of the tomb. It approached the spot on which she stood, and the features of Henry Sinclair, wearing a look of sad reproach, were distinctly visible to her as the shade glided between herself and her newly wedded lord.

With a faint cry she would have fallen had not Peyton turned and sprang forward in time to receive her senseless form in his arms.

Long, long was it before she recovered from her deathlike swoon. She then related what she had seen, and clung to the belief in the reality of the spectral visitation with such tenacity, that reasoning and soothing failed to calm her mind. Before another day had dawned she was raving in the delirium of a brain fever, and in one week from her ill-omened marriage she was laid beside him

whose spirit she believed had summoned her to join him.

The incidents on which the foregoing pages are founded are literally true. That the supernatural visitation was the offspring of an overwrought imagination and superstitious mind, a real case of monomania, there can be little doubt. The vagaries of an excited imagination are producing results on Mormons and Millerites quite as inexplicable to sober reason as the catastrophe of *The Broken Vow*.

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THE CANTATRICE.

BY H. T. TUCKERMAN.

"Il cantar che nel' anima si sente."—PETRARCA.

THE scent of violets always reminds me of Bianca C—. Her love of the flower amounted to a passion. She almost invariably wore a bunch in her girdle, and a porcelain vase that stood on the little centre-table beside her chair was often filled with them. I have seen her in winter, when the noonday sun warmed the atmosphere, pour a drop or two of the perfume upon her fingers, and throwing open the window, wave her hand to and fro, and as the breeze wafted in the fragrance, you could easily fancy that it was the first delicate breath of spring. The association is not incongruous, although Bianca was a public character. Her spirit was as meek and her affections touched to as pensive a sweetness as the violet. She was but an indifferent actress. You could never lose sight of the woman in the character. Her imitative power was very limited. It was impossible not to be conscious that she was feigning the queen, the lover, or the priestess; and, at the same time, such was the personal fascination that you felt, that "only herself could be her parallel." Her professional success was owing entirely to her voice. It was not of great compass, but liquid and true to a marvel. She warbled rather than sung. I never heard any thing so bird-like. Often have I instinctively ran my eye suddenly from her face to the lofty ceiling, as if the notes were rising visibly. They seemed to escape so perfect, and well upward like the air bubbles through a gaseous spring—

"And then my youth fell on me like a wind
Descending on still waters."

I grew buoyant with the melody, and could, as it were, feel every mortal weight fall away from my heart. Not that the sensation was always joyous; Bianca's voice had a silvery pathos in its most lively overflowings; but whatever the sentiment of the music, her cadences were wonderfully aerial. They gave one the feelings of wings. I could apply to her Shelley's apostrophe to the sky-lark—

"Teach us, sprite or bird,
What sweet thoughts are thine;
I have never heard
Praise of love or wine
That panted forth a rapture so divine.

"What objects are the fountains
Of thy happy strain?
What fields, or waves, or mountains?
What shapes of sky or plain?
What love of thine own kind? What ignorance of pain?"

The excitement of such vocalizing lingered with me long after its audible vibrations died. I used to walk the streets for hours on leaving the opera-

house, to lull my nerves into weariness. Nothing vivifies consciousness like high and exquisite music, especially that of the human voice. The waves of emotion palpitate beneath it like a sea. While singing, Bianca gave you the impression of a prophetess, or a sybil won momentarily from her superhuman attributes by love. When crowned with the garlands of public admiration, she drew near the foot-lights, and standing with a Niobe-like inclination, extended her beautiful arms—

"As if the expanded soul diffused itself,
And carried to all spirits with the act
Its affluent inspiration."

To the burst of applause, a silence ensued almost sublime in its pervading quietude; and then, moved by the grateful homage, and kindled by the vast expectancy of a thousand hearts, she would become quite oblivious of the prescribed music, and fearlessly utter strains of unpremeditated melody that thrilled the hushed multitude with delight and awe. The bewildered orchestra forgot their vocation and rose to listen. Fair heads leaned from the long range of boxes intently. Strangers, side by side, unconsciously grasped each other, by that instinct of sympathy which "makes the whole world kin." At the close, there always succeeded a feeling of vivid surprise, so great was the lapse from ideal height to a sense of the immediate and the actual. It seemed as if upon that stream of harmony we might have attained some infinite good. For a moment, the heart vacillated with the pain of awaking from its exalted dream, and then turned its baffled enthusiasm into plaudits to the genius of the hour. But it were as hopeful an emprise to attempt to paint the lightning in its momentary effulgence, or impart in words an idea of the most innate grace of character, as strive to convey any adequate conception of triumphs so ethereal. When death chills the sculptor's heart, some tokens of his life survive in marble. The bold design, the lines of tasteful skill, the expression of saintly beauty, yet assure us how nobly he thought or how earnestly he felt. And thus is it with the limner and the bard. But the song expires on the lip. Its only trophies are in the auditor's memory. Its triumph endures alone in the heart it stirred and the imagination it fired. Yet how endearing are even these frail oblations, since they belong to that vast array of latent agencies which perhaps have more to do with our weal and wo than all the apparent enginery of life. Truly, music is the most spiritual of the fine arts. Apart from her vocalism, it is

to describe Bianca. In her by-play, and, indeed, at all times, she gave you the idea of a lady. There was nothing professional in her looks or attitudes. Her manner of standing and moving, the expression of the eye, every glance and gesture was perfectly refined. Without being sylph-like, her gait was winning. It was unique upon the stage. There is something exceedingly significant in a woman's step. It is marvellously indicative of character. There is a certain indescribable gait which I have but rarely witnessed,—neither the queenly tread of the Tuscan peasant, nor the graceful step of the fair Spaniard, nor the lightsome trip of the Grisette; it is a modest, gentle, candid movement, breathing alike of rectitude and dependence. It hath something in it irresistibly appealing. Such a gliding about one makes home divine. Scott's perception of it is evinced in his picture of Dumbiedikes for hours silently watching Jeannie Deans as she moved upon her household duties, through her father's cottage. There is no little integrity in natural language, and that of woman hath not a more meaning chapter than her gait. You could not watch Bianca as she paced the stage, (trod is too bold a term,) without feeling it would be a glorious privilege to walk beside her through the world. Another attraction belonged to her of which nature is not prodigal. Her shoulders were expressively beautiful. They rounded so full and deftly, that the head was thrown slightly forward, giving an air of the most sincere humility, which was the more affecting from its union with such noble gifts. I delighted to watch her slow progress up the stage when arrayed in a most becoming oriental costume. The full white drawers, brought tightly round the ankle, the snug embroidered jacket, the short skirt, and the turban of rich merino, finely displayed her symmetrical form and gave relief to every movement. It was grace personified;—not that of art, but the free, dignified, and yet meek grace of genuine womanhood.

The success of a vocalist, however scientific, is liable to many interruptions. A slight illness or depression of spirits will often obstruct that delicate instrument, upon the clearness and facility of which the exercise of the art depends. Bianca was remarkably even and sustained. I could never detect any waywardness in her moods. She appeared happy, indeed, in the triumphant display of her rare powers, but there was in this feeling no elation or oppressive excitement—all seemed resolute and placid. She bore herself like one serene and patient, as if above the minor cares of her profession, and devoted to it from love and duty rather than ambition. I remarked this to one of the very few individuals who enjoyed her society; she repeated the observation to the *prima donna*. She was pleased at the recognition of character it implied, and soon after consented to gratify my earnest desire for an introduction. We became intimate; and as I gradually learned her rare worth and the circumstances of her life, my original enthusiasm was deepened and confirmed.

Her family were nobly allied, but unfortunate; and they regarded her vocal powers as a blessing destined to redeem them from poverty. On the very night of her *début*, the Duke of ——— became her passionate admirer. At length he addressed her and was rejected. Her father's pride was enlisted, and his commands, united with her lover's importunity, at length induced her to yield. A year had not elapsed after the marriage, before her husband proved himself a brute. To add to her misfortunes, his estate was seized by a swarm of abused creditors. With the forbearance of a lofty soul, she forgot his unkindness and cheerfully returned to the stage. Yet he gambled away her earnings, and continued to abuse and neglect the benefactress not less than the wife. In vain her friends remonstrated and urged a separation. Her affection, if it had ever been cordial, was long since destroyed; but a moral heroism inspired her. She resolved still to suffer and to hope. At the close of a season of extraordinary brilliancy, a benefit was arranged for her on a scale of liberal patronage worthy of the artist and the woman. It was a tempestuous night, but every nook of the splendid opera-house was crowded. An audience whose faces had grown familiar by their uninterrupted attendance, thronged to pay a heart-felt tribute and revel once more in the delicious strains of the *prima donna*. That very day, on her husband's applying for money which she had not to bestow, in a fit of disappointment and rage, he felled her to the earth. Hours passed away before she rallied sufficiently from the insult to prepare for the exertions of the night. But necessity at last nerved her to the task. How few of the delighted assembly who warmly greeted her appearance, dreamed of the base injury she had so recently suffered! How little were they aware that the dark ringlet that unwoniedly rested upon her left temple, concealed a scar which she carried to her grave! Acute pain or wounded feeling will not seldom inspire genius to achieve wonders. Byron was roused to poetic effort by harsh criticism, and the annals of eloquence boast no more glowing pages than those dictated by the fervour of moral indignation. Bianca, on that night, astonished and transported the coldest hearts. There was an almost superhuman energy, a sublime depth, a tearful sweetness in her tones. They were like the swan's dying strains. Alas! that the flower must be crushed ere its sweetest odours are breathed! When the last quivering note had ascended, there was a pause, as if the repressed emotion so long accumulating gathered itself up for utterance; and then came the long, thrilling outbreak of grateful admiration. Crowned like a victim for sacrifice, exhausted by intense effort and self-control, Bianca remained in her dressing-room, with her face bowed upon the table, her frame trembling, her long hair dishevelled, and every vein fevered with the throbs of contending impulses, until the profound quiet around made the beatings of her heart audible. She had locked the door, and was wholly unconscious of that absorbing reverie. In a few

moments she was arrayed for her departure from the deserted scene of her glory. Not another being remained in the extensive and dusky theatre but the porter who had charge of the keys. He stood muffled up in his cloak holding a flambeau. The lights were all extinguished. The stillness of the desert reigned through the house. When Bianca appeared, the man lifted his cap respectfully, and planting the torch upon the stage at her feet, went out to announce her readiness to the coachman. Several minutes elapsed, and he returned only to declare that neither equipage nor servants were visible. The heartless tyrant for whom she had so patiently toiled, was too worldly-wise to neglect the appearance of kindness towards one so idolized, and accordingly her carriage was invariably in attendance. Its absence, at such a moment, could only be ascribed to him. It was a scene for a tragedy. There she stood in the silent gloom of that desolate temple, so recently alive to countless hearts entranced by her magical tones, utterly abandoned! The echoes of wild applause had but just died away. Dreams of love and beauty, kindled by her song, even at that moment haunted countless pillows. Her name lingered yet on many a lip tenderly eloquent in her praise. The idol of the multitude was more solitary than the meanest denizen of that populous city. It is difficult to imagine a more agonizing contrast than this between the triumphant artist and the injured woman. A while she was immovable, allowing the blasting truth to feed like a vulture on her heart. The poor

spectator of her voiceless anguish looked upon her despairing features, rendered more impressive by the red glare of the torch-light, and scarcely breathed for reverence and pity. Many a kind word had she spoken to him, and often were his children's wants supplied by her bounty. She was even thoughtful for the humblest of her fellow-creatures, and the rude bosom of that unenlightened drudge swelled with a monarch's anger even at the faint surmise of her griefs. Her resolution was taken; and, before the wonder-stricken attendant could remonstrate, she had rushed past him into the tempest. On through the driving rain she walked, and, like Lear, taxed not the elements with unkindness. To reach her residence, (it had never been a home,) it was necessary to cross a fashionable street. A flash of light almost blinded her as she entered the thoroughfare. One of the large mansions was illuminated, and she heard above the wailings of the storm, the gay music of the dance. A carriage stopped before the portico as she approached, and the blaze of a street-lamp revealed to her the livery of her own groom. She checked her rapid steps, and her husband, glittering in a rich ball-dress, with a woman of high birth but questionable fame leaning on his arm, hastily entered the palace. The last drop was added to her cup of bitterness. Endurance had reached its acme. She turned back, and in a few moments was beneath her father's roof. The wretch who called her his at the altar, had lost the only jewel of his being forever.

THE CENTRE-TABLE.

NO. III.

BY MISS LESLIE.

MRS. MARTLET's second party "came off" a few weeks after the first. On this occasion she consulted Mrs. Cottinger and Miss Olivant, and all went smoothly. As head waiter, she engaged a very elegant but also very efficient coloured gentleman, who came at five o'clock in the afternoon to assist in the final preparations, and to see that the lamps, fires, &c., were all in order—taking rank, for the time being, of the resident house-waiter, as a pilot always ranks the captain. By-the-by, who ever saw a pilot, that the moment he stepped on board and stepped into his brief authority, did not look up at the rigging and order something to be done immediately? The head waiter was followed in due time, by half a dozen of his pupils, all smart and well-trained youths of divers shades of colour, having their wits about them, and doing things *comme il faut*. The refreshments had been ordered from one of the really best establishments in the city, and were all exquisite, both to the sight and taste.

A few evenings afterwards, this party was talked over at Mrs. Wayland's centre-table, and Mrs. Martlet was congratulated on its success, which she mainly attributed to having followed the advice of her friends in employing only the best confectioners and the best attendants. She had been much amused with the quaint sayings of the chief waiter while giving him directions, or rather holding consultations with him previous to the arrival of the company—for though very respectful in all his suggestions and objections, he managed to convince her that his way was the best way possible, and therefore she trusted him to take it; being aware, as she said, that he ranked high in his profession, and had "*stood at good men's feasts*."

"Till I came to Philadelphia"—continued Mrs. Martlet—"I was but little accustomed to Ethiopian talk and Ethiopian manners, the domestics of my father's house being always our fellow Yankees. As my husband prefers coloured servants to white ones, we have them, of course; and I am often much entertained with their characteristic misapplication of words, and their misty expressions, 'whose true no-meaning puzzles more than wit.'"

Mrs. Wayland.—Some years since, when preparing to issue invitations for a party, I was desirous of previously engaging Carroll as head waiter for that evening. I therefore sent for him a week in advance, to ascertain if he could be at my house on a certain Thursday. He replied that he was already bespoken to wait on that evening at

another party. "To be sure"—said he—"it happens Thursday week is going to be very strong of parties. But if you cannot put off, perhaps, Mrs. Wayland, I may get you a substitute spontaneously." "Very well"—said I—"send Bogle to me, and I will engage him." "Indeed, Mrs. Wayland, I am sorry to say Bogle is bespoke for a wedding." "Then Shepherd"—was my reply—"let me have Shepherd." "As to Shepherd, ma'am, he enjoys very bad health, and is always painful." "I am sorry for that. But where is Frisby—I will take him." "I don't think Frisby can be taken for that evening, ma'am, for he's going the very same Thursday to reside at a great ball and supper out of town." "I am unwilling to defer my party"—said I—"for it is intended chiefly for some strangers who are engaged every night till Thursday, and will leave Philadelphia next day. Carroll, you must really find me some one that I can have that evening as head waiter. Where is Solomon King?" "Why, Mrs. Wayland, I don't believe Solomon King would suit you now, any how. He's taken very much to drink; and besides, he's dead."

Miss Olivant.—What an amusing book might be made of the sayings of coloured people, if all our American writers would join in "giving in their experience."

Mrs. Martlet.—It should be followed by a similar collection of ludicrous Yankee anecdotes.

Miss Brookley.—And by another of western jokes.

Mrs. Martlet.—I wish some duly qualified writer, with a keen perception of the ridiculous, and the faculty of communicating that perception to his readers, some one who has travelled much in this country, and has learnt to know understandingly "the north from the south, and the east from the west," would prepare a good sizeable book of American comic anecdotes.

Mrs. Wayland.—Such a work would not only be popular in America, but I think its success would be great in England, where such anecdotes have an additional gloss and freshness from their novelty.

Mrs. Martlet.—Yes; our friends across the water have begun already to discover that there is some fun to be had in "these United States," though one of their most ultra-amiable female writers has designated America as "the land of sour faces and *sour beer*."

Mrs. Pelby.—Well, I never knew before that ours was a beer country at all—that is, not particu-

larly. And I am sure, what beer we have is not half so sour as English porter.

Mrs. Wayland.—I am more offended at the sour face libel. It is a common observation of foreigners that American faces are generally thoughtful and acute—but a vinegar expression is certainly not one of their characteristics.

Miss Brookley.—I wish, Mrs. Martlet, this English authoress could have seen all the gay, good-humoured, bright countenances, and bright faces, that were at your delightful party the other evening.

Miss Olivant.—Yes; every one appeared as if they were happy in themselves and desirous of being the cause of happiness in others. And the dressing, generally, was remarkably elegant and tasteful. It is impossible, when becomingly and gracefully drest, not to be satisfied that we look well, and the satisfaction naturally excites a pleasant feeling, and gives additional animation to the countenance, and ease to the deportment.

Mrs. Martlet.—Miss Brookley, I heard much admiration the other evening of the beautiful style of your hair, and the charming arrangement of its flowers. It had *un grand succès*. Lepage must have drest it, as one of his countrymen made an exquisite shoe, in a fit of enthusiasm.

Miss Brookley.—I am glad that my hair was approved, and doubly so that my dear Mrs. Wayland hears of its *grand succès*, for to her, and not to Mr. Lepage, belongs all the honour and glory. Her own taste and her own hands were so kind as to arrange it for me.

Mrs. Wayland.—I dressed Louisa's hair entirely with reference to her age, figure, height, features, complexion and countenance.

Mrs. Pelby.—Dear me! must all those things be considered in dressing hair? I thought to fix it according to the newest fashion was quite enough.

Mrs. Wayland.—You know my father was an eminent painter, and from him, and from artists who visited at our house, I was early accustomed to hearing disquisitions on the art of producing effect in pictures, and on the best manner of heightening beauty, and softening the want of it.

Mrs. Pelby.—But people are not pictures.

Mrs. Wayland.—True; but (though it is a truth not always admitted) the rules for looking well are very similar, both with regard to living beings, and in the creations of the pencil. For instance, no good portrait painter would represent his sitter in a costume that, however fashionable, was calculated to render conspicuous any striking defect of figure or face. If a lady's neck was too short, he would not cover it with a close, heavy ruff, or a broad double-quilled frill, or a high standing collar. If her shoulders were too high, he would not be willing to paint her in a dress that had puffings, or fillings, or loose full gathers elevated on the very tops of those shoulders. If her chest was very flat and narrow, he would be reluctant to depict her in a dress with what is called a plain body, fitting closely to the figure, without the improvement of any folds, pleats, or gathers. Yet, in a woman

with a fine bust, and a round, plump form, a plain body may look very well. If the arms of the lady were thin and bony, he would neither cover them with long *tight* sleeves, nor expose them with short ones. If her face was long and narrow, he would not make it appear still longer and narrower by carrying a heavy mass of curls down both sides.

Mrs. Martlet.—I dislike extremely those long, thick ringlets, hanging down on each side of the face and neck. They remind me of the immense wigs of Queen Anne's time, such as, I believe, are still part of the paraphernalia of an English judge, and which Lord Brougham caricatured, when he was chancellor, by wearing an enormous one made of whalebone split into fibres and curled.

Mrs. Wayland.—Ringlets injure the effect of the face and neck when they descend below the chin; and, like all other things, they should be worn in moderation. When too long, they are peculiarly ungraceful, especially from under a bonnet. To some faces, curls of every description are unbecoming. They rarely look well on women who, in ceasing to be young, have grown thin and faded. Ladies decidedly and palpably old, seem older still by affecting ringlets, particularly if those ringlets are light-coloured. The contrast is too glaring between the golden curls that properly belong only to the bloom of youth and the wrinkled cheeks and withered skin of age. It is much to be regretted that so many elderly persons assume light hair; for, even when natural, it is rarely becoming, except when accompanied by a smooth white skin, tinted with the rose of youth.

Mrs. Martlet.—I believe the poet Gay was right in saying—

"The fairest blossoms fade with early blasts,
But the brown beauties will like hollies last."

Mrs. Wayland.—It is generally true. If a young lady feels any regret at finding herself a brunette in the *rosiest* time of girlhood, she may be consoled with the hope of her complexion continuing to look as well at thirty as at fifteen.

Mrs. Pelby.—I am glad that I am neither light nor dark, but something between.

Miss Brookley.—Mrs. Wayland, what do you think of middle-aged ladies wearing, or rather showing, their own hair after it has turned *entirely* gray? I have met with several who dressed very much, particularly at parties, but seemed to have no hesitation in displaying their silver locks, curled in front and platted behind. Now, I thought if they were old enough to have gray hair, they were old enough to wear caps.

Mrs. Cottinger.—Perhaps their hair had become gray prematurely. There are instances of hair turning gray at a very early age.

Miss Brookley.—I do not know. I think all the ladies to, whom I allude, looked as if their hair might have changed in the regular course of time. Still they were not what are called old women.

Mrs. Wayland.—I approve the appearance of gray hair in ladies who are really far advanced in

years, and who have adopted the style of dress which is so proper and so respectable for a venerable matron.

Mrs. Martlet.—You mean "the customary suit of solemn black," worn "with all appliances and means to boot."

Mrs. Wayland.—Yes—for consistency is a virtue. When a lady has descended so far into the vale of years that she ceases to wear colours, and has adopted for the remainder of her life, one permanent style of dress, plain, neat and convenient, then by all means let her appear in her gray hair parted simply on her forehead. It accords well with a close muslin cap, trimmed with black or dark ribbon, a muslin 'kerchief, or a plain collar with a nicely pleated frill, and a black or dark-coloured gown.

Mrs. Martlet.—That is the costume of our venerable old ladies in New England—such as are often designated by the title of Madam instead of Mrs.

Mrs. Wayland.—Yes; I have a charming old aunt living in Boston, who is called Madam Chastney, to distinguish her from the wives of her three sons. She looks like what she is—the patriarchess of a large family. She has recently promised me a visit.

Mrs. Martlet.—I am sure we shall all be delighted with her.

Miss Olivant.—It is certainly something of an accomplishment to know how to grow old gracefully. I am trying to acquire it; and, as a first step, you will see me no more in the juvenile simplicity of clear white muslin frocks, and with a real rose in my hair. At five-and-twenty, one can no longer be mistaken for a school-girl.—But to return to the gray hair of middle-aged ladies, I think with you, Mrs. Wayland, that it is generally in bad taste to make a display of it. It does not correspond with gay colours, glittering jewels, and a showy dress of the latest fashion. As long as a lady continues that style of attire, she should certainly conceal her gray hair under a brown *chevelure*, and the darker the brown the better she will look in it—after the roses and lilies of youth have left her cheeks and forehead. To me, there is really something ghastly (though I am glad to say it is a sight that is rarely seen) in the look of a female head of gray hair ringleted, braided, and drest for company, without a cap or any other covering. In such cases, I always wish that the head had been bald as well as gray, so as to render such a display impossible.

Mrs. Wayland.—Also, no female face can look well without some decided colour about it, either of the hair or the head-dress; and gray is too much of a middle tint to give proper effect, particularly when in conjunction with a faded face that is all middle tint. The whiteness of a cap is always a set-off to a complexion that has lost its brightness. Therefore, caps are universally becoming to women who have arrived at middle age, even when their hair is still untouched with silver. If a face is too

full and broad, a cap-border, shading the sides, will make it look smaller. If the face is thin and sharp, a cap-border softens its rigidity, and conceals the hollowiness of the cheeks.

Miss Olivant.—It is really grievous to observe the reluctance of many unmarried maidens to commence wearing caps. How very long do they put off the evil day, as they seem to consider it—falsely supposing that they have only to refrain from caps to be still regarded as girls.

Mrs. Wayland.—Not knowing that, when her youthful days are really over, a lady looks younger (and certainly handsomer) with a cap than without one.

Mrs. Pelby.—It is still worse for grandmothers to go with their heads bare. Now, I put on turbans, and toques, and berets, and caps, and all such things, earlier than was necessary, for my hair is not yet gray. But, as I always wished to wear it according to the fashion, it was a perpetual trouble to me. When preparing for a ball, I have gone a whole night and all next day with curls pinned up under an old gauze handkerchief tied round my forehead; or I've kept them all that time twisted in papers. And, after all, if the evening chanced to be damp, there were my locks hanging down in long, straight strings, with the curl entirely out, making me look like a crazy woman—only there were enough others to keep me in countenance. The worst thing that ever happened to me in all my life, was an accident about my hair. I will tell it to you, if you will all promise to keep it a profound secret. I would not, for ten thousand dollars, that it should be known throughout the world.

Mrs. Martlet.—That it will not be, we can all safely promise.

Mrs. Pelby.—It occurred in my girlhood, when my name was Miss Prinxley. Mrs. Wayland, do you remember (it was not so very long ago) a fashion of wearing the hair in a large broad roll or bow, at the top of the head, the bow filled out, and kept smooth and shapely by a sort of cushion that was put inside and fastened with pins.

Mrs. Wayland.—Yes. Those cushions were about the size and figure of a moderate sweet potato. They were stuffed with wool and covered with black or brown silk.

Miss Brookley.—Of course, those sweet potato things were carefully concealed.

Mrs. Pelby.—To be sure they were. Now, I suppose you will call what I am going to relate, (remember, 'tis a great secret,) the

STORY OF A HAIR CUSHION.

Well, then, there was a great ball given by the City Dancing Assembly, and a very select one it was. I never went to any balls that were not perfectly genteel; and I was at this with quite a large party—matronized by my youngest sister, who had been married about a fortnight. She was so lucky as to get off before she was sixteen. I am only three years older than her. I was drest in a straw-coloured crape over satin, trimmed with rouleaus

and pale yellow roses. I had a gold cord and tassel round my waist, and a gold chain round my head, fastened in the middle of my forehead with a topaz clasp. I had straw-coloured satin shoes, and a pale yellow fan, with gold spangles. Every thing matched. My sister's husband told me I looked like a bunch of buttercups; but another gentleman said I was more like an evening primrose. 'That was polite, was it not? There were many very polite men in former times. But that time was not so very former either.

Well, it was a very great ball; and, as all the great French hair-dressers were engaged, and hard at work from early in the morning doing the heads of the ladies, I had to take up with the best I could get. I don't believe he was a Frenchman at all, though he called himself Mr. De Jones; for, instead of speaking Frenchified, he talked about dressing air with horange buds and happle blossoms, and hantic hoil. If it had been very long ago, I could not have remembered either him or his sayings. Well, my hair was rolled into a very large bow, and filled out with a very large new sweet potato, as you call it, that I made myself for the purpose. And I was drest, and we all went to the ball, and I expected a great deal of pleasure. I was engaged to dance the first set with Mr. Capers, who cut the pigeon-wing better than any gentleman in the city. Pigeon-wings were fashionable in those days, and showed to great advantage in the Cauliflower. But, after all, those days were not days of yore, but only some time since.

Well, to make the ball still greater, we were promised the company of General Jackson, who happened to be passing through the city. It was just after a famous victory of his—

Mrs. Cottinger.—The battle of New Orleans?

Mrs. Pelby.—No, I think it was some other victory later than that. However, because he was a great general and victorious, the managers waited on him at his hotel, and invited him to this ball, and had the walls drest out with eagles and flags, and laurel wreaths. And he was so polite as to come, and bring with him a handsome young officer that they said always aided him, and, I suppose, helped him out when he was at a loss. The general and his help did not come early, and we were all in the midst of dancing, when suddenly a folding door, that had been kept shut on purpose, was thrown open. Every body stopped short, as they do in the Surprise Cotillon, and the music ceased a moment, and then struck up General Jackson's March, and so we knew he was coming. The managers went forward and received him at the door, and then one of them conducted him all around the room, and introduced him to all the ladies. And the general bowed, and took the hand of every one, mine among the rest. Yes, he actually touched this very hand, and I was so confused, and also so delighted, that I thought I should have died—for he was in full uniform, a tall, fine-looking man, and much handsomer than we had supposed, and very graceful besides. I hope he

noticed the beautiful trimming on my dress. I thought I saw him look down. Well, after he had gone round all the ladies, he was taken by the managers into the centre of the room, and then the gentlemen went up, and were introduced, and shook hands with him as he stood. After this, the general was invited to dance. He excused himself from cotillons. It was before the days of gallopedes and mazurkas, and, at that time, nobody waltzed but foreigners. Yet it was not so very far back neither. The general consented to join in a country-dance, and, accordingly, led a young lady to the top of the room, which was very large, and had a fire-place at each end. His partner was the envy of the whole company, and the next envied was the lady that danced with his young aid. Two country dances were formed; but every body tried to get places in that where General Jackson was. So it was the longest I ever saw. There was actually dancing on the two hearths. Luckily, both fires had been allowed to diminish to a bed of coals. Anthracite was not then introduced. It seems to me a very short time since it came into use, and I am not apt to be mistaken. I shall never forget a stout, red-cheeked young Englishman, who made desperate efforts to get himself and his partner into General Jackson's country-dance. At last, when, in turning, his hand was touched by the general, the Englishman's face brightened till it shone like the sun, and a pleased smile remained on it all the rest of the evening. I heard him say—"This will be a fine thing to tell when I get back to Brummagem."

You cannot think how well General Jackson danced; and, of course, while dancing, I had another touch of his hand. At last, my partner and I got down to the bottom, and I found myself directly on the hearth, so that I had to hold back my dress lest it should catch fire on the glowing coals. As soon as the dance was over, the general took his leave, having another engagement. Then the ladies sat down, and fanned themselves, and drank lemonade; and the gentlemen gathered together in clusters, and stood about, and talked of General Jackson, and his victory, whatever it was. Men always seem fond of victories. But there was a group at the lower fire-place, that grew larger and larger, till it actually increased into a crowd. I thought they could not be talking of General Jackson, for they were putting their heads together, and whispering and laughing, and sometimes looking round cautiously as if they were afraid of being overheard. There seemed so much mystery, that, though the ladies were all dying with curiosity, none of us ventured to inquire, lest it should be something improper. After awhile, they summoned a waiter, and we then saw a coloured man come walking from the fire-place, carrying across the room, at arms length, a shovel, on which lay something burning and smoking, and smouldering—the fellow holding it out afar, and turning away his head with a queer face, as if the fumes disgusted him, but, in reality, trying to smother a laugh.

The whole room was filled with the odour of burning wool, as he carried it out on the shovel to throw it away. It was then whispered about that a lady's black silk hair cushion had fallen on the hearth and caught fire, and that the gentlemen (finding it was not a roasted potato) had been puzzled what to make of it—wondering what sort of thing it could possibly be, and for what use it was intended.

I put up my hand to the top of my head, and, to my utter horror, my own hair cushion was not there. I then comprehended that this unlucky cushion was mine and I was mortified beyond every thing, and frightened lest I should be discovered as the owner. So, to turn aside suspicion, I began to talk about it immediately, very loud and fast. "Dear me"—said I—"how very heedless some people are. Who could possibly have fixed her cushion so carelessly, that it should fall out of itself. I would give a dollar to know the owner. How very mortifying! How badly she must feel! This scent of the burning wool must be absolutely sickening to her—poor thing! Of course, she will keep herself perfectly quiet, lest she should be suspected as the owner of that vile cushion thing."

And it would have been best for me if I *had* kept quiet—for I overshot the mark, and was so fluttered and so fussy, and I chattered so much about it, with my face burning all the time, that I soon began to perceive I *was* suspected, and that I was betraying myself more and more every moment. I saw the people about me exchanging smiles, and some even were slyly whispering. My face grew redder and redder, and without their knowing it, I was continually putting my hand up to the top of my head, till I had pulled down nearly

all my hair. My sister stopped me, and told me, in a low voice, that I was making myself a spectacle for the whole room, and that, by this time, every body knew that the cushion was mine; and that she was ashamed of me, and would never matronize me again.

All my pleasure was spoiled for the evening. I danced no more, but, during the next set, I hid myself behind a window curtain, and cried till I felt better. I was so glad that the ball was found flat after the general's departure, and that it broke up unusually early. Fortunately, I had heard that very evening that those hateful hair cushions were quite out in New York, so I determined not to make another, but to be the first to leave them off in Philadelphia.

Next day, I could not forbear taking a walk past the ball-room building. There I saw, in the street, several boys playing in the gutter. One of them fished out, with a stick, the remains of my poor hair cushion. I could not help stopping to say—"Boy, how dare you do so?" "Do what?"—said the boy, looking up surprised. "What right have you to be raking in the gutter?"—said I. "I guess any body has a right to do *that*"—was the answer. "You are not our mother"—said one of the boys. "Nor our aunt neither"—said another. Then I grew frightened, and ran into a neighbouring shop, lest they should chase and hoot me.

Only think, from that fatal night of the lost cushion I got a habit of putting my hand to the top of my head. But it is entirely worn off. I never do it now.

[She puts her hand to the top of her head.]